

Understanding Multilevel Citizenship in Rural Adolescents

By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Curriculum and Teaching and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how a multilevel model of citizenship worked with rural adolescents as a means to better understand how educators can revitalize and increase adolescent willingness to participate in both civil and political activities. This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach to survey and interview high school seniors from twenty rural schools in Eastern Kansas. It seeks to determine how adolescents' willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level might vary, what factors impact an adolescent's willingness to participate at each level, what pattern of factors existed across all three levels, and how they would define each of the levels.

Based on the survey results, respondents were more willing to participate at the local and national level than the global. However, within these results, four factors were found to be statistically significant at all three levels: discussions with parents and peers, involvement with a religious youth group, and parental involvement in trying to solve problems. In evaluating these items further through a semi-structured interview, these factors were found to be important in that they helped to foster the development of a connection to specific levels. This demonstrates that within a multilevel model of citizenship, factors that were found significant at all three levels were the context and process factors that fostered making a connection to these imagined communities.

The value of this study is that it provides a different model of evaluating civic and political efficacy by placing it within a multilevel model of citizenship, where previous studies have only implied a local or national focus. If adolescents can indeed have diversified interest in participating at various levels, then these findings provide a fresh

look at ways to perhaps increase and better understand adolescent willingness to be civically and politically engaged.

Acknowledgements

This project was a long process that deserves to acknowledge those who provided encouragement and insight during this journey. I want to first thank those members of my dissertation committee who have provided vision and their expertise as part of this process. I purposively chose these specific individuals because prior to the dissertation process they had all had a tremendous impact on my development as a young scholar and educator. Thank you for your examples. The next person who I want to thank is Becky Swegle who helped me through the revision process and provided her insight. I am sure there were times when she questioned if English was my first language.

One of the most important relationships I have had over the years is with my advisor, Joe O'Brien. I am grateful for the relationship I have had with Joe who has served as a mentor and a friend. What I am most appreciative is that at times he has treated me as a colleague on the numerous projects we have worked on. Additionally, his insight and guidance throughout this project has been invaluable and helped me in ways that could never be repaid. I am grateful to be able to have him as a friend.

Last, I want to thank my wife, Erin, and son, Grayson. I am so grateful to have such a loving family and a wife who has had to endure fourteen years of putting her husband through school. Erin, it is finally done!

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Statement of Problem

The decreasing political and civic involvement of Americans in the 21st century has caused many scholars to question the integrity of American democracy and the role that future generations will play in it (Putnam, 2000; Hibbling & Theis-Morse, 2002; Wattenberg, 2002, 2006). Many see citizenship as the official link between the individual and community, where a key component is participation (Patrick, 1998; Dalton 2008). Here participation represents the willingness of individuals to be involved, and to be informed about how to be involved (Dalton, 2008). Only 21.5% of those between the ages of 18-29 voted in the 2014 midterm election, which was the lowest voter turnout in more than seventy-two years (Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2014). At the same time, involvement in community organizations that help deal with societal issues and build a sense of community has been on the decline (Putnam, 2000; Gould, 2011). This raises the question that if Americans are not civically and politically involved, who will make decisions, and what will this lack of participation mean for the democratic process? In an attempt to revitalize and increase civic and political participation, advocates have emphasized that “investing in civic learning strengthens American democracy,” since “schools are the guardians of democracy” (Gould, 2011, p. 12.).

The ever increasing rate at which contemporary globalization occurs has generated interest in preparing adolescents to be civically mindful of what is taking place beyond the local and national level (Apple, 2003). As Friedman (2005) has argued, “the world is flat,” implying that the barriers that once separated geographic regions of the

world are now being torn down. Proponents of citizenship education claim that adolescents are no longer exclusively confined to the local and national level, and are expected to be able to understand wider implications of actions at the local, national, and global level (Banks, 2001; Myers, 2006; Davis, 2008). Some have argued that this engagement needs to be framed within a local, national, and global level, also referred to as a multilevel model, because the degree of willingness to participate in civic and political activities can vary at each level (Delanty, 2000; Bottery, 2003; Heater, 2004; Myers, 2006; Davis, 2008). To this end, if there is a general concern about the decline of willingness to participate, then perhaps one way to address this issue is to gain a better understanding of how adolescents' willingness to engage can vary across these levels and what can be done to increase this participation.

Research on citizenship in adolescents has focused on various factors such as extracurricular involvement and opportunities (Youniss & Yates, 1997a; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008), adolescent civic attitudes and behaviors as they relate to that of their parents/guardians and peers (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003; Hart, et al., 2004), socioeconomic status (SES) and ethnicity (Lutkus & Weiss, 2007), and classroom instructional practices (Torney-Purta, 2002; Andolina, et al., 2003; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007). However, research in the U.S. fails to distinguish how these factors can vary within a multilevel model of citizenship.

Over the past two decades researchers have argued that citizenship as part of a membership within a given polity is nested within multiple layers of geographic and imagined communities where ones involvement can vary between them (Law & Ng,

2009; Bottery, 2003; Delanty, 2000; Heater, 2004). Mitchell and Parker (2008) have gone on to argue that “citizens-in-formation [does] not fit neatly into spatial models of affinity” and that commitment to these imagined communities can vary (p. 796). Despite this, empirical research has been minimal and mostly framed within the context of understanding trends in citizenship within large geographic regions that transcend national citizenship. The best example of this is research that has focused largely on citizenship within Europe. Here researchers have discussed how citizenship is no longer framed within a single nation-state, but rather can transcend into notions of local, national, and a European Union framework (Painter, 2002; Maas, 2013; Lenzi, Vieno, Santinello, Nation, & Voight, 2014). Other research that has evaluated citizenship education between various parts of the country has also emerged within China. Here researchers have stated that “citizenship education needs to be understood and interpreted with the dynamic contexts ranging from the national level, not only upwards to include the global one, but also downwards to cover subnational ones, including the . . . local levels” (Law & Ng, 2009, p.283). Although this research provides a framework for understanding and noting the importance of a multilevel model of citizenship, it fails to address how a multilevel model of citizenship might fit within the U.S., and which factors are important in increasing an adolescent’s willingness to participate within a local, national, and global level.

In understanding adolescents’ willingness to be engaged at the local, national, and global level, this study focused on research within the context of students who specifically attend rural schools. Studies have noted that there is a lack of scholarship on citizenship within rural schools, despite the fact that half of all school districts, and one-

third of public schools are in rural areas, which accounts for one-fifth of all public school students (Martin & Chiodo, 2007; Provasnik, et al. 2007). Studies on citizenship in urban and suburban school have illustrated that factors like socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and parental/guardian characteristics correspond to low levels of civic engagement. In rural school settings these types of factors have not corresponded to low levels of civic engagement (Hodgkinson & Obarakpor, 1994; Howley & Bickel, 1999). This means that rural school settings offer an interesting environment to study adolescents' civic engagement and contribute to what little research exists.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on assessing rural 12th grade students' willingness to be civically engaged at the local, national, and global level and then determines what types of factors might impact one's willingness to be engaged at these various levels. Here an adolescent's willingness to be civically engaged represents constructs of an "imagined community" where the degree of willingness to participate can vary based on how adolescents see themselves within each of these levels (Mitchell & Parker, 2008). Hence the concern is not so much how to define the community and/or levels, but rather how adolescents see themselves as citizens indicated by their degree of willingness to be engaged at the various levels.

As children move into adolescence they begin to take on more pro-social behaviors in the form of working with others and looking at perspectives beyond their own (Eisenberg, 1990; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinard, 2007; Mussen & Eisenberg, 2001). However, pro-social behavior only takes on a form of civic engagement as adolescents

develop a sense of responsibility, which has been shown to not only vary amongst adolescents in various countries, but also in adolescents within the same school (Torney-Purta, 2002; Metzger & Smetana, 2009). Bandura (1997) notes that efficacy (an adolescent's confidence about his or her own ability to operate within a particular community) is a central characteristic of participation, even if it is at a future date, which is shaped by environmental factors, both school and non-school. Because of this, social cognitive theory provides an ideal framework in understanding how an adolescent's willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level is determined by environmental factors.

In understanding adolescents' willingness to participate, researchers have stated that a theoretical framework needs to exist that addresses the person (e.g., gender, ethnicity, family background), context (e.g., family/guardian and peer relations, school values), and process (e.g., observational learning opportunities) factors of an adolescent's environment (Wentzel, 2006; Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). However, since the environment that adolescents operate in is key, these variables need to be examined within school and non-school settings as learning takes place within a variety of settings. Only focusing on one setting can limit our understanding of an adolescent's willingness to be civically engaged (Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). Schools have been given the charge through the social studies curriculum to prepare students for civic participation (Shaver, 1977; Wineburg 2001; Gagnon, 2003; Thornton, 2004). Previous research focusing on schools has looked at civic knowledge, classroom discussion and atmosphere, service-learning opportunities, and extracurricular activities (Delli Carpini & Ketner, 1996; Campbell, 2007; Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004;

Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). However, non-school variables are also an important influence on adolescent's development of civic engagement. These include parental/guardian and peer relationships, and community involvement (Hart, et al., 2004; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2007; Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014). This is why it is important for research on civic engagement to focus on both school and non-school setting in order to understand causes by which civic participation emerges.

Last, because of the focus on adolescents' willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level, it is important to note how adolescents view these levels. In many instances, these terms are used to define more than just spatial dimensions, but are used for descriptions of events, networks, movements, identities, etc. This means that differences in perception of the local, national, and global level can translate into "differences in social behaviour and social coordination" (Guy, 2009). If this is the case, understanding how adolescents define these levels can be important in determining how or why they choose to participate within them.

Research Questions

If there is a general concern for future civic and political participation by adolescents, and given that citizenship needs to be framed within a multilevel model, then understanding what types of factors impact an adolescent's willingness to be engaged at local, national, and global level is crucial for those wishing to invest and promote civic education. In trying to understand what factors impact adolescents' willingness to be engaged within a multilevel model of citizenship, this study focuses on four research questions:

- 1) Are rural adolescents more willing to participate at the local, national, or global level?
- 2) What person, context and process factors within a school and non-school setting are significant in impacting rural adolescents' willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level?
- 3) Which person and context and process factors within school and non-school settings are significant in impacting rural adolescents' willingness to participate at all three levels?
- 4) How do rural adolescents define the local, national, and global levels?

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The study of citizenship among adolescents is an interdisciplinary topic, drawing largely upon the fields of political science, sociology, psychology, and education. It is important to note that these four disciplines are not mutually exclusive and that they overlap considerably, which makes it difficult to tie research to one specific field. The development of citizenship in adolescents is clearly so important to many stakeholders that it cannot be contained to one field.

Rationales and Philosophies of K-12 Citizenship Education

There are a variety of definitions and concepts of citizenship and what its role should be within K-12 education. In very generic terms, citizenship can be defined as the social and official link between the individual and community (Patrick, 1998). Dalton (2008) argues that citizenship is characterized by two key concepts: participation and autonomy. Here participation denotes that citizens must be willing to be involved in the deliberation of policy that extends beyond simply voting and should be defined in broad terms.

Autonomy denotes that a good citizenry should be “sufficiently informed about government to exercise a participatory role” (Dalton, 2008, p. 78). These two principles are similar to those listed by Parker (1999) who states that citizenship requires the possession of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that allows for active participation within a democratic framework. However, the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions is impacted by what the setting determines is of importance, while operating within the community where adolescents participate (Bandura, 1997). This is why

various views of citizenship exist and why no particular view of citizenship will ever prevail as a dominant form in the U.S. (Connolly, 1983).

Because of the variation that exists in defining citizenship it is important to define the difference between civic engagement and political engagement. Civic engagement is working to address a public concern, which may or may not require political means. Political engagement is working within a political structure to impact public policy relating to an issue. Adolescents are more likely to be involved in activities that allow them to be civically engaged instead of politically engaged, especially since many see civic engagement as an alternative to being politically involved in a system that they typically view as being corrupt (Galton, 2001). The types of civic engagement that adolescents can be involved in relate to collecting or providing resources to help those at the local, national, or global level. These include things such as toy and food drives during Thanksgiving and Christmas for local needy families, collecting items for the construction of hygiene kits for those displaced by floods or tornados, or selling baked goods to raise funds for non-profit relief efforts.

However, civic and political engagements are not mutually exclusive. Youniss, McLelland, and Yates (1997) argue that adolescents who become civically engaged are learning the skills and processes that will prepare them for political engagement in young adulthood. This is why the majority of research on citizenship does not distinguish between the two and typically uses the term *civic* as an umbrella term. This study follows this trend by using the term *civic engagement* as an umbrella term to denote that adolescents can be civically and politically engaged in any of these three levels. However, the implication is that this political engagement may be at a future date as

adolescents move into young adulthood and are able to participate more fully. This is why this study uses the term *willingness to participate* and other variations to denote that adolescents are more likely describing their future plans.

It has long been held that the development of the disposition, knowledge, and skills associated with civic engagement in one's community is largely the charge of the social studies curriculum in primary and secondary schools. Dewey (2008) states that a society has to offer an education that allows individuals to take a personal interest in how to secure social change without causing disorder, while Smith (2003) denotes that the existence of public education in the U.S. is an effective way of instilling civic values. In adhering to these two statements, Niemi and Junn (1998) claim, "schools, along with their teachers and curricula, have thus long been identified as the critical link between education and citizenship, as the basis from which democratic citizens emerge" (pp. 2-3). This responsibility is reflected in the mission statement of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), a professional organization dedicated to preK-16 social studies education. Their section on *Creating Effective Citizenship* maintains that the "core mission of social studies is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2001). In short, the expectation is that students will develop the skills, values, and content from the social studies curriculum that will prepare them to be civically engaged. However, in looking at education programs, social studies curriculum, and perceptions of what citizenship is, there are a variety of types of citizenship that researchers have noted within the U.S.

In reviewing the recent research on K-12 citizenship education, several studies

have denoted various types of citizenship. The first of these by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) describes the existence of three types of citizenship found in civic education programs: 1) Personally responsible; 2) Participatory; and 3) Justice oriented. Here Westheimer and Kahne analyzed various citizenship education programs, looking not necessarily at the various education strategies of the programs, but rather the conceptions that were behind meeting the program goals. Their list does not represent all education programs or that one program can simultaneously promote more than one of these types of citizenship through its agenda. However, they maintain that highlighting different visions of these programs can allow us to understand the “underlying goals and assumptions that drive different educational programs” and the impact that this might have on preparing adolescents in meeting their future responsibilities (p. 241).

Westheimer and Kahne’s first type of citizenship found within education programs is *personally responsible citizenship*. They define personally responsible citizenship as advocating for adolescents who assume responsibility for their local community by obeying laws, paying taxes, recycling, etc. They theorize that good character development helps students to feel responsible for their local communities and to want to improve society.

The second of type of citizenship listed by Westheimer and Kahne is *participatory citizenship*, which differs from personally responsible citizenship in that participatory citizenship emphasizes adolescents being involved in local community organizations that are trying to solve problems within the local community. In addition, Westheimer and Kahne note that these individuals are more informed about how government agencies work and which agencies are accountable and responsible for those

projects that they are participating in helping to solve. This means that participatory citizenship emphasizes working within the structure of the government to help and make society better.

The last classification of citizenship is *justice oriented*. Here adolescents are taught to critically assess political and social issues of injustice that perpetuate norms of inequality that are problematic to a democratic society. This may lead adolescents to both challenge existing structures that produce injustice and work to bring about changes that deal with these inequalities.

In delineating how these types of citizenship would be different, Westheimer and Kahne use the example of a food drive. With personally responsible citizenship the focus would be for an “individual to contribute to a food drive.” On the other hand, participatory citizenship would emphasize helping to “organize a food drive.” Finally, justice-oriented citizenship would look at “why people are hungry and acts to solve the root cause” (p. 240). Westheimer and Kahne denote that they do not necessarily advocate for one particular type of citizenship, as the “right type” is in the eye of the beholder. However, based on their analysis of several education programs in the U.S., many encompass some aspect of these three types of citizenship in preparing adolescents for future engagement.

Though Westheimer and Kahne focused on the goals of various education programs, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) instead focus on the political discourse of citizenship found in various curriculum outlines. Abowitz and Harnish’s classification of citizenship includes: civic republican, liberal, critical citizenship and transnational citizenship. According to Abowitz and Harnish, *civic republican citizenship* is based on

the ideology of love and service to one's community with civic membership defined as a commitment to the political community's goal. These values are transmitted through a discourse to students through the educational process and reinforced by values of the local and national community, which typically encompasses ideas of supporting U.S. democratic ideas and tradition. Though the researchers do not say so, they imply that these values are traditionally very conservative in nature.

In contrast, Abowitz and Harnish describe *liberal citizenship* as being different from *civic republican citizenship* in that it places more importance on notions of civil liberties. Here the discourse is that since the U.S. is a mixture of people, there is not necessarily a single voice, and engaged citizens should be involved in discussions and consensus building about issues facing the nation. In order for this to happen, adolescents must learn the skills needed to participate in these types of collaborative efforts to preserve the democratic focus of the nation and prevent tyranny.

The type of citizenship that Abowitz and Harnish denote as the least present in school curriculum is that of *critical citizenship*. Here critical citizenship is concerned with the notion of membership and identity, with emphasis on focusing on those individuals who have been excluded from participation for various reasons based on race, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. By focusing on notion of membership and identity it is thought to challenge the notion of citizenship as normative and highlight the issues that diverse groups face and need to be expressed. However, this type of citizenship is only found within the text of theoretical and scholarly articles, which is why it is rarely seen as part of school curriculum.

The last type of citizenship listed by Abowitz and Harnish is that of *transnational citizenship*. Transnational citizenship focuses on getting students to understand that the nation and locale where they live is not self-contained, but interdependent on those who live outside of their region. Here they note that transnational focuses on cultivating democratic notions of tolerance so that students can bridge the gap between their own ideologies and culture and understand that of others. Abowitz and Harnish conclude that within most aspects of U.S. citizenship education one of these four notions exists as the basis for curriculum.

The two studies described above address the major trends and focus of civic education within the U.S. However, since Westheimer and Kahne's and Abowitz and Harnish's classifications do not entirely emphasize the global level, it is important to look at what is meant when notions of global citizenship are discussed. This is especially important since global citizenship has become a key buzzword within social studies curriculum in the 21st century (Rapoport, 2009). Many see global citizenship as an extension of cosmopolitan citizenship. However, cosmopolitan citizenship has become the flavor for intellectuals, largely in Europe, and has not really been a term used within social studies curriculum. Cosmopolitan citizenship denotes that there is a level of cultural diversity that exists that citizens should be aware of (Gunesch, 2007). In some regards, it is very similar to that of Abowitz and Harnish's notion of transnational citizenship, except that cosmopolitan citizenship places the importance of cultural diversity within a local and global context. The reason being that the ideology of cosmopolitan citizenship is a byproduct of the current sociopolitical situation in Europe where identity is transcending geopolitical boundaries. Global citizenship, on the other

hand, implies that because of how technology has accelerated the rate by which intercultural exchanges happen, there is a sense of cultural uniformity where values have developed some common meanings between societies. This means that individuals are in “league with other human beings on the other side of the cultural wall” (Samapatkumar, 2007, p. 74). Additionally, scholars have argued that focusing on global citizenship can lead one to understanding the “multicultural aspects of the American narrative” (Davis, 2008, p. 135), “ ‘concern’ over injustices that happen” (Noddings, 2005, p. 3), and “a citizenry that knows and cares about contemporary affairs in the whole world” (Dunn 2002, p. 10). However, as a word of warning, Myers (2006) argues that social studies education needs to adopt this new orientation of globalization within instructional practices as a part of, and not an alternative to, developing national citizenship. Despite this, there still remains a large disagreement on what exactly global citizenship is as terms like “global citizen” and “globalization” rarely appears in state curriculums (Rapoport, 2009). While there is no consensus for what constitutes global citizenship, there is growing support for a conception of citizenship beyond the local and national level.

Though these above studies provide insight into the types of citizenships largely found within citizenship education programs in the U.S, what they lack is an understanding of how civic commitments do not necessarily fit within a define spatial model. Westheimer and Kahne and Abowitz and Harnish’s analyses of various education programs and curriculums are defined in terms of the nation-state where the focus is on the local and national. Here there is no notion that adolescents can have various allegiances to imagined or physical communities. Instead they are based on the notion

that efficacy and involvements are universal to all levels of engagement. However, two exceptions are: critical citizenship, mentioned by Abowitz and Harnish; and cosmopolitan citizenship, which places citizenship as part of membership of a shared identity and culture. Regardless, Abowitz and Harnish still imply a foundation set within the nation-state, while cosmopolitan citizenship denotes going beyond geo-political boundaries, yet denying the various allegiances that might exist within an individual. This means what is needed is a new conception of citizenship, which takes into consideration that individuals can have multiple allegiances and that commitments are not necessarily tied to the nation- state.

Multilevel Citizenship

Though the types of citizenships described above represent the major ideologies of citizenship in both curriculum and education programs in the U.S., they place citizenship and adolescents' commitments within a one-dimensional/level framework. However, Mitchell and Parker (2008) maintain that citizenship in adolescents does not “fit neatly into spatial models” and that individuals have an “increased spatial and temporal flexibility to multiple allegiances” (pp. 779, 796). They argue that one's commitment transcends the nation-state and imply that one's willingness to participate can vary between the local, national, and global level as their own identity is constructed as part of these imagined communities. They go on to define an imagined community as one that builds upon issues of race, religion, socio-political, cultural, or economic interest. More importantly, these imagined communities are constructed based upon ones “allegiance” to an item that are not “neat, for it de-historicizes the relationship of citizens with space”

(p. 800). Related to this, Bottery (2003) to call for a “multi-layer” approach because the current nation-state is an amalgamation or dissolution of communities that exist within or beyond the nation-state. Because of this, research should not evaluate a single-dimension of citizenship, but evaluate various levels to determine how factors influence an adolescent’s willingness to be civically engaged at a local, national, or global level could vary.

Many researchers have argued that a multilevel citizenship framework needs to exist to understand current conditions. However, this research is theoretical in nature and does not provide any empirical evidence to suggest what might influence an adolescent’s willingness to participate in various levels (Delanty, 2000; Bottery, 2003; Heater, 2004; Myers, 2006; Davis, 2008). Research on multilevel citizenship has become prominent in studies on citizenship in Europe, where it has been used to reflect an “individual’s simultaneous membership in political communities at a variety of spatial scales (local, regional, national, and European)”, while also noting that this is an “attempt to break with the assumptions that citizenship, national identity and the national state territory are, or should be, congruent” (Painter, 2002, pp. 93, 102).

A recent study by Lenzi, et al. (2014) used a variation of multilevel citizenship in order to better understand parental characteristics’ influence on Italian adolescents’ feelings of civic responsibility. This study focused only on looking at the local and global levels. In evaluating the local level the researchers came from a theoretical framework that local civic responsibility is impacted by what they deemed local/neighborhood factors, which the research framed within terms of a physical location and not that of an imagined community. They define local civic responsibility as

“including informal interactions, organization of local events, and resolutions of local problems” (p. 254). On the other hand, they define global as being impacted by altruistic views. For example, “societal issues having their roots at the macro-level, that is, in institutional, economic, or social features characterizing a society or group of societies” (p. 254). They distinguished between the local and global by types of issues that one could be involved in or deal with. Their findings suggest that parenteral characteristics can indeed impact adolescent feelings of civic responsibility locally and globally differently. They uniquely differentiate the types of activities that one can be involved in at the local or global level, where local level activities are civic and political in nature and those at the global are civic. Though this provides interesting insight into how a multilevel model of citizenship may work, Lenzi, et al’s research does not undertake the type of multilevel citizenship advocated by Bottery (2003).

However, there has been some recent research in China that has used a model of multilevel citizenship similar to what has been advocated. Law and Ng (2009) found that adolescents, respectively in Hong Kong and Shanghai, despite having the same prescribed citizenship education curriculum and national boundary, exhibited similarities and differences in how they viewed various levels of a multilevel citizenship framework. They argue that because citizenship is a social construct that is influenced by global and local factors, adolescents “can select and develop different combinations of citizenship elements from different levels [local, national, and global]” (Law & Ng, 2009, p. 887). Building upon the theoretical model of Law and Ng, Pan (2011) found that adolescents in Shanghai varied in their views about the national and global level in that the national level was of more significance than that of the global level. Similarly, Pan’s findings

suggested that adolescents' "attachments to global, national, and local communities are not merely determined by educational providers, but also influenced by their impression of, and participation in, these communities" (Pan, 2011, p. 300). One interesting point of importance is that in both Law & Ng, and Pan's studies they did not define what the local level is. The assumption, based on reviewing their research, is that they defined it within a physical geographic area set to the specific cities they studied. In many instances this is problematic. For example, those living in Shanghai, a city of more than 24 million people, might not consider other parts of Shanghai as being "local," but rather interpret local as being a subdivision of the city. This makes it difficult to know how adolescents might interpret the term, "local", especially when set within the context of large urban areas compared to small rural areas.

Though the empirical studies conducted by Law and Ng (2007) and Pan (2011) provide a theoretical framework for conducting research on citizenship using a multilevel model, this current study varies from their model. Since the above researchers were largely concerned about civic education curriculum, they not only included items corresponding to a local, national, and global level, but included a personal-social dimension as well. The items they used to evaluate a personal-social dimension included such things as behaving responsibly, being polite in public, and accepting people of different ethnicities. This study is not directly interested in the evaluation of citizenship education, but more focused on how various factors can impact an adolescent's willingness in being civically engaged. The multilevel model used in this dissertation is composed of three levels: local, national, and global. Second, building upon survey items highlighted by Flanagan, Syvertsen and Stout, (2007) and Kahn and Sporte (2008), the

intent is to assess civic willingness to participate at each of the three levels. Here an adolescent's responses at each level are a measurement of how they see their current and future willingness to participate in each of these "imaginary communities", which are conceptualizations of "legal, cultural, economic, and social purview of spatial scales . . . that are constantly in flux" (Mitchell & Parker, 2008, p. 778). In trying to understand this future willingness to participate, this study looks at what factors impact an adolescent's willingness in being engaged at each of these levels.

Citizenship Development in Adolescents – Human Development and Identity

Construction

An adolescent's willingness to participate has to do with how they see themselves as part of various imaginary communities. In order to better understand different degrees of willingness to participate as part of multilevel citizenship, research and theory in human development can provide a theoretical framework. This is because the development of civic engagement corresponds in many ways to other dimensions of social and cognitive development of adolescents (Wilkenfield, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). Of particular interest to those studying civic engagement is the development of pro-social behaviors that correlate to high levels of efficacy. This process is based on understanding how an adolescent's setting helps them to feel more efficacious, which leads to the solidifying of high and low degrees of willingness to participate. It is here that social cognitive theory provides a basis for understanding the construction of participation because adolescents learn within a social context.

Social cognitive theory is largely based on the premise that adolescents learn and show certain behaviors by observing others in a variety of social interactions.

Wilkenfield, Lauckhardt, and Torney-Purta (2010) note that in the very strictest sense, social cognitive theory is not really a developmental theory in that there is not a sense of age-specific change or progression, but this theory is useful because the key tenets of self-efficacy and observational learning are “clearly relevant to youth civic engagement” (p. 195). Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s ability to complete a task in a given context (Bandura, 1997, 2001). Here family and peers determine what is of “prestige and popularity” through the activities they are involved in (2001). Bandura (1997) further argues that the development of efficacy is related to how an adolescent feels teachers and fellow students treat and value them and various activities. When adolescents feel that a task is contrary to what the setting establishes as normative or prestigious then they are less likely to produce that type of action. People that have a high degree of efficacy, specifically civic, typically work to master actions because their perception is that these actions are of prestige (Bandura, 1988, 1997).

Here Bandura’s notion of self-efficacy as part of social cognitive theory provides a framework for researchers to understand how contextual factors impact the development of adolescents’ civic willingness to participate. Research that has been grounded in social cognitive theory has looked at such context factors including: service-learning and extracurricular involvement and opportunities (Youniss & Yates, 1997b; Hart, et al., 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Kahne, Crow & Lee, 2013), adolescent civic attitudes and behaviors as they relate to that of their parents/guardians and peers (Andolina, et al., 2003; Hart, et al., 2004; Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009; Earl,

Hargreaves, & Ryan, 2013), classroom instructional practices (Torney-Purta, 2002; Andolina, et al., 2003; Flanagan, et al., 2007; Flanagan, Stoppa, Syvertsen & Stout, 2010, Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014), and effective teaching models (Pajares, 2005). These factors reflect a move from childhood to adolescence when more pro-social behaviors develop and take on the form of working with others and the ability to look at perspectives beyond their own (Eisenberg, 1990; Eisenberg, et al., 2007; Mussen & Eisenberg, 2001). This means that as adolescents develop, factors from various settings influence how and what they feel committed to and what they come to accept as their own responsibilities. Additionally, they learn what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior through their observations and involvement in a variety of activities (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Rubin, 2007; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007).

Involvement in various activities within a community is also related to how one develops a sense of identity. House (1977), as part of his personality and social structure perspective theory, argues that identity is created through day-to-day interactions with family and peers and social structures that are in place. Here he theorizes that these interactions and structures reinforce items of importance as part of a set identity that develops in an individual. Expanding upon Erik Erikson's works on identity, Maricia (1966) states that adolescents' coming to terms with who they are and what they value has to do with how they come to see their own participation. As individuals' sense of identity develops, their actions and interactions determine how they view themselves and the world around them. In many ways, these theories on identity and social cognitive theory are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but share similarities in their approach that are beneficial to those interested in studying citizenship in adolescents (Wilkenfield,

Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). However, these approaches separate in that the social cognitive theory is largely used to understand the factors that impact or lead to the creation of identity, with an understanding that identity is largely concerned with how individuals see themselves and the community. This is why, despite the ability to use survey measures to understand identity, many prefer to utilize a semi-structure interview because of how identity can greatly fluctuate (Adams, Gullotta, & Montemayor, 1992). This is especially important when one looks at adolescents' civic engagement, since their willingness to participate is determined by how they identify themselves within that community, both physical and constructed (Hart, Richardson, & Wilkenfield, 2011).

Person Factors in Adolescents' Willingness to be Civically Engaged

Torney-Purta, Amadeo, and Andolina, (2010) maintain that an appropriate model assessing civic engagement needs to have independent variables (factors) related to the person, context and process. Their argument builds upon Wentzel's (2006) framework that was designed to give a clear conceptual framework by which research questions can be addressed. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of studying civic engagement, researchers tend to focus on their disciplinary strengths, which often deny other outlying factors. For example, someone from political science might focus on the context of where factors important to increasing civic efficacy happen, while a psychologist might focus on the process of how to increase civic efficacy. In short, this can often lead to problematic results because studies that are asking the same questions can yield different results due to differing points of analysis used to answer these research questions.

In evaluating factors that might impact an adolescent's willingness to be engaged, one of the factors that needs to be considered is that related to the person. Here person factors are those items that do not necessarily change when an individual moves from one setting to another, which include items like SES, gender, and race.

When evaluating adolescents' willingness to be civically engaged, the first of these person factors to be considered is race. Recent studies have continued to indicate that racial minorities are less likely to be civically engaged, possess lower levels of political knowledge, and less likely to have discussions about social problems and current events than their white peers (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Rubin, 2007; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). Researchers have concluded that this is largely because non-white and low-income families typically feel alienated from their physical communities and are skeptical regarding how democratic their community really is, leading them to be limited in opportunities and knowledge about being civically involved (Torney-Purta, 1990; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Middaugh & Kahne, 2008; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013). However, a more recent study found that African Americans were more likely to be civically engaged when they participated in civic discourse and were encouraged to participate in opportunities in either a school or non-school setting (Hope & Jagers, 2014). The success of these programs focuses on recognizing the need for social change and working to make things better within the communities where they live (Kirshner, Strobel, & Fernandez, 2003; Hope & Jagers, 2014).

Closely related to the issue of race is the person factor of socioeconomic status. In many studies these factors share a symbiotic relationship in that poverty or wealth typically correlate to race and ethnicity and its positive or negative impact on

adolescents' willingness to participate (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Rubin, 2007; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). However, research has concluded that despite race, those from a lower socioeconomic background could not describe some of the ideologies of the Democratic or Republican Party, while an analysis of the 2006 NAEP test on civics found that students from low-income households typically lack knowledge needed to participate in a democratic society (Delli Carpini & Ketner, 1996; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007). At the same time those from low socioeconomic backgrounds were less likely to be involved in school and non-school activities, have discussions about political topics and participate politically and civically as young adults regardless of race (Delli Carpini & Ketner, 1996; Hart, et al., 2004; Duke, Skay, Pettingell, & Borowsky, 2009). The reason for this, similar to that of race, is that those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds typically feel alienated and lack the resources to be engaged within their communities (Hart & Atkins, 2002).

Another important person factor to consider is gender. In a majority of quantitative studies, the issue of gender has not been discussed, primarily because there does not appear to be any statistical difference between how males or females have responded. Nonetheless, some research has indicated that males are more likely to have favorable attitudes to civic engagement, while females tend to focus more on performing items of community service than males (Cicognani, Zani, Fournier, Gavray, & Born, 2012; Eisenberg, & Morris, 2004; Metzger & Smetana, 2009). Additionally, Hooghe & Stolle (2004) found that the two did not differ in anticipated levels of participation, but that males were more likely to take on more radical and confrontational forms of engagement, while females were more likely to focus on social-movement related forms

of engagement. Some researchers have concluded that this difference in male and female participation comes from both historical, structural social factors, and gender stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Jost & Kay, 2005).

Though the person factors mentioned above have been important areas of study within the study of civic engagement, research has been lacking with regard to reviewing person factors within a multilevel model of citizenship. This is especially true considering that the person factors mentioned above are typically evaluated within the context of “community,” which is defined as local based in these studies. Because of this there is indeed a need to evaluate these factors beyond just the local level and see how they might play out within a framework that considers local, national, and global.

Context and Process Factors in Adolescents’ Willingness to be Civically Engaged

As noted previously, one of the issues with the study of civic engagement among adolescents is that the researchers of the various disciplines that study this phenomenon tend to focus on their own discipline’s strengths. Though this study is fundamentally based in social cognitive theory, it asserts that there is an important need to evaluate the context and process factors so as to be able to learn how one might be able to increase civic efficacy in adolescents.

Context factors are those items that happen within a particular setting. In this study the various factors are divided within the context of school and non-school settings. These include items like school curriculum, service opportunities, and parental and peer discussions, which happen within a particular context. The rationale for dividing context factors between these two settings is outlined by Torney-Purta, Amadeo, and Andolina,

(2010) who maintain that studies that look at only a school or non-school setting “impoverishes our understanding of the process of acquiring civic concepts, skills and dispositions” (p. 503). Additionally, because of the concern of how to increase efficacy as part of citizenship education, being able to distinguish factors between these two contexts is meaningful for stakeholders who are interested in what can be done inside and outside of the classroom.

Process factors are those items that allow adolescents to be engaged in observational learning. These include extracurricular activities and parent/guardian civic engagement, which has some sort of scaffolding maintained by adults (Wentzel, 2006; Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). However, just like context factors they also happen within a specific setting. Because of this, as will be detailed later, process factors will be categorized as to whether they happen within a school or non-school setting.

Research looking at factors within a school setting notes that adolescents with higher content knowledge typically are more likely to report a willingness to be civically engaged (Delli Carpini & Ketner, 1996; Galston, 2001; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Delli Carpini and Ketner’s (1996) study found that even when controlling for person factors, efficacy, and civic engagement, those who possessed a higher level of civic knowledge were more likely to vote in elections. This is because civic knowledge “helps citizens understand their interest as individuals and as members of a group,” and “alters our view on specific public issues” (Galston, 2001, pp. 223, 224).

Because of the correlation between civic knowledge and civic engagement, one of the obvious remedies to increase engagement is to increase the number of social science courses offered. However, perhaps the most eye-opening research done on civic

knowledge was a longitudinal study by Hart, et al. (2007), which concludes that civic knowledge may not be as important as previously thought. This study denotes that eight years after high school the effect of civic knowledge on civic engagement was not significant. When looking at political participation there was only a small effect, which was measured by voting. They determined that increasing civic knowledge is not necessarily the most cost effective solution because it would take an additional seven years of social studies related courses to increase civic engagement by one standard deviation.

Though civic knowledge is an important aspect of citizenship education, Hart, et al. (2007) conclude that those who partook of service-learning opportunities made available by the school were more likely to vote and volunteer in early adulthood. This is because adolescents become more aware of issues in a community, develop a personal interest, leadership and communication skills, and establish networks to discuss community problems (Youniss & Yates, 1997a; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Crystal & DeBell, 2002; Metz & Youniss, 2003). Kahne and Sporte (2008) found in their analysis that service-learning activities were highly efficacious ways of fostering the development of civic engagement even when controlling for demographics, neighborhood and family context, and prior commitments to civic participation. However, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) found that the “success” of service-learning opportunities was highly related to the philosophical nature of the program and how it fit within a curricular framework. So even though school sponsored service-learning activities were shown to increase adolescents’ efficacy, different results might exist based on the rationale of the service-

learning activity, which can have a significant impact on adolescents' willingness to participate at various levels (Youniss & Yates, 1997b).

Closely related to service-learning activities is the impact of extracurricular activities on citizenship engagement. Those found to be involved in extracurricular activities were found to develop leadership-type skills, and to be civically engaged later in life (McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Hart, et al, 2007; Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). Extracurricular activities, whether it is in a leadership or member role, allow adolescents to be involved in discussions and coordinate efforts, which helps to develop skills that will be beneficial to future civic engagement in young adulthood (Glanville, 1999; Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003).

Lastly, another important school factor that impacts citizenship efficacy is the overall school and classroom climate and curriculum. Students involved in higher track-type classes, like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or other dual credit classes, typically provided students with more in-depth knowledge, but more importantly allow for deeper discussion to take place on topics (Pace, 2008). The importance of classes that were open to political discussion and allowed a freeness to discuss items in an open setting have been shown to increase an adolescent's political interest, especially if there is a sense of belonging and a feeling of respect from their teachers (Torney-Purta, 1995; Bremen, 1997; Torney-Purta, 2002; Andolina, et al., 2003; Flanagan, et al., 2007.). In addition, openness of a classroom setting was shown to increase civic knowledge. This led Campbell (2008) to conclude that it is perhaps not necessarily the amount of civic knowledge presented to a student that matters, but rather the nature of the discussion that does. Interestingly, teacher characteristics related to effective instruction

did not explain or predict NAEP civic exam scores, making it difficult to explain “differences in civic development between urban and suburban children” based strictly on teacher characteristics (Hart & Atkins, 2002).

A large body of literature exists that evaluates how factors outside of schools influence the development of citizenship in adolescents. The research is consistent in that parental/guardian and peer civic participation, discussion of current events, and adolescent involvement community activities, were all key factors of adolescents’ civic participation later on in young adulthood (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Hart, et al., 2004; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2007; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Duke, et al., 2009; Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009). The key issue in explaining these non-school factors has been that social capital in a community can either promote or hinder civic engagement. Social capital can be defined as the “shared norms or values that promote social cooperation” that “produce extensive positive and negative externalities” (Fukuyama, 2002, pp. 27, 29). Here social capital is based on the values and trustworthiness of those in the community, in that it facilitates cooperation (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000, 2001; Print & Coleman, 2003).

One important factor of adolescent desire to be civically involved is their relationship with parents and peers. Adolescents who typically discuss current events and political topics with their parents/guardians are more likely to have higher levels of civic knowledge and are more willing to be civically engaged (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). In addition, a parent’s/guardian’s education and civic knowledge impacts the degree to which these discussions take place (Hart, et al., 2004; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007).

Adolescents typically model their parent's/guardian's behavior, and through discussion of these topics feel a higher degree of connectedness to the community. These expectations typically carry over into the school setting, especially higher performing schools, where teachers and administrators create an atmosphere where "good citizenship" becomes a foundation for the school (Wilcox, 2011). Peers were also found to be important in that they help to establish norms and supporting in participating in various activities (Torney-Purta, 1995; Flanagan, et al., 2007; Wilkenfeld, 2009). Adolescents who have peers that are involved or interested in civic related issues or school or non-school activities are themselves actively involved in similar activities. However, where the literature neglects to denote whether these activities have consequence or a focus that is local, national, or global in nature.

Similar to person factors, the research is vague in determining how context and process factors might fit within increasing an adolescents' willingness to be engaged in a multilevel model of citizenship. Though many of the studies dealing with person factors hint at pertaining to engagement at the local level, some studies dealing with context and process factors are more ambiguous because at times it is suggested that civic engagement might mean local or national, while the global level is not present. Utilizing these types of factors within a study using a multilevel model of citizenship could help to fill this void in the research.

Person, Context, and Process Factors as Part of a Multilevel Model of Citizenship

In trying to gain a better understanding of how adolescents' willingness to participate fluctuates at various levels, this study utilizes a framework as suggested by Torney-Purta,

Amadeo, and Andolina, (2010) that in answering research questions, person, context and process factors need to exist. Based on the above research, this study focused on fourteen factors as indicated in Table 1. Students were asked to answer questions about each context and process factor as it relates to the local, national, and global level. This means that it is not just important to know whether students talks to their parent/guardian about current events, but rather if they talk to them about current events happening at the local, national, or global level. This range of factors was included in this dissertation to provide a wide basis in covering several key items that have been denoted within research on citizenship in adolescents.

Table 1

Person, Context and Process Factors

Person

Gender

Ethnicity

Free or Reduced Lunch (SES)

Context and Process

Non-School Setting

Parental Discussions

Peer Discussions

Community Involvement – Religious

Community Involvement – Non- Religious

Peer Community Involvement

Parental Community Involvement

Parental Education

School Setting

Curriculum

School Opportunities

Extracurricular Involvement

College Credit Courses

Rural Schools

As Martin and Chiodo (2007) noted, a problem in conducting research on rural schools is how to define a “rural” school. In 2006, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in conjunction with the Census Bureau developed the new urban-centric classification with four locale categories: city, suburban, town, and rural; with each subdivided into three subcategories. The rural-fringe territory is defined as being less than five miles from an urbanized area, an area that consists of a population of 50,000 or more, and 2.5 miles from an urbanized cluster, an area that consists of a population between 25,000 and 50,000 (Provasnik, et al., 2007). The rural-distant and rural-remote classifications only differ in that the distance from urban areas is larger. Though this provides the basis of how rural communities and schools can be defined, previous research also provides good guidelines in focusing on a community population less than 5,000, district enrollment less than 2,500 students, and small high schools that are less than 400 students (Stern, 1994; Colangelo, Assoulinr, & New, 1999; Roelke, 1996; Stewart, 2009).

Much of the research done on adolescent civic engagement has largely been based within the setting of urban and suburban schools. Even research that has used large data sets that included information from rural districts fails to denote how civic engagement might be different in rural areas (Delli Carpini & Ketter, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Zaff, et al., 2003; Hart, et al., 2007). In short, rural schools have often been ignored by those conducting research on citizenship education, making it difficult to understand how an adolescent’s willingness to participate can develop within this context (Martin & Chiodo, 2007). The only rationale is that urban and suburban schools allow for samples to be much larger, requiring a researcher to work with a smaller number of schools and

districts, and there already exists a large body of literature to provide the basis for further research in suburban and urban schools.

Rural schools are unique in that many of the factors that might be associated with a low level of academic performance or civic engagement do not seem to be similar to those in urban or suburban areas. According to a report by NCES, *Status of Education on Rural America*, those living in rural areas have a higher degree of poverty (35%) than those in suburban areas (28%), parents/guardians have a lower level of education and educational aspirations for their children than those in urban and suburban areas, and a higher percentage of high school drop-outs (11%) than suburban areas (9%) (Provasnik, et al., 2007). However, within rural schools the negative effects associated with a low SES standing on student achievement is diminished, leading Hodgkinson and Obarakpor (1994) to the conclusion that rural and urban poverty are not similar (Huang & Howley, 1993; Howley & Bickel, 1999). Stewarts's (2009) analysis of the student achievement in Texas, based on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test, concluded that rural schools were more successful when working with lower SES students in achieving academic success than urban schools. Many of these results seem to be contrary to what has been found in other studies that deal with urban and suburban areas concluding that rural schools provide a unique setting (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; Torney-Purta, 1990; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Middaugh & Kahne, 2008).

Research that has addressed these issues within the setting of rural schools concludes that a key characteristic is that schools are at the center of a rural community in that they provide the social and cultural centers that nurture civic, political, and social affairs, which is typically done by providing a location where functions can happen

(Ronan Herzog & Pittman, 1995; Lyson, 2005). This means that rural communities typically have a close relationship with school personnel and foster a family-like atmosphere, which is one of the key characteristics of rural school success (Cotton, 1996; Barley, & Beesley, 2007). Prater, Bermudez, and Owens (1997) concluded that this family like atmosphere and focus on schools as the center of the community is why parents in rural communities attend school-sponsored events more than those in suburban and urban areas. Ultimately, this small school setting leads adolescents to be more likely to participate in extracurricular activities (Hopkins, 2005).

Being involved in school and non-school extracurricular activities was shown to have the same positive effects in increasing the desire to be civically engaged as in urban and suburban areas. Ludden's (2011) analysis of 8th and 9th graders from thirteen rural Midwest school districts found that 49.8% of students were involved in extracurricular or community-based activities, with 31.5% being involved in religious youth groups. Elder and Cogner (2000) found in their research in adolescents in Iowa that four out of five adolescents participated in some kind of sport and that "adolescents devoted 14 hours each week to school activities and another 4.5 hours to community organizations" (p. 167). In scanning research done in urban and suburban areas there is not necessarily a figure that reports what the overall involvement of extracurricular activities by adolescents is. This makes making a comparison difficult, but it is highly likely that this figure may be higher than those in urban areas and is not as highly correlated to SES, ethnicity, or parental characteristics. Nonetheless, rural adolescents involved in extracurricular activities were also more likely to have a higher degree of civic efficacy and academic achievement similar to those in urban and suburban areas. Rural

communities also provide fewer opportunities in the number of diverse extracurricular activities where peers and adult leaders are the same in both school and non-school activities (Elder & Cogner, 2000). This has led Elder and Cogner (2000) to conclude that despite a variety of options, rural communities are able to create stronger ties, because adult leaders and peers are able to form stronger relationships based on trust and shared values.

But, how does this translate into ideas of civic engagement within a rural setting? Martin and Chiodo (2007), in their research, found that adolescents in rural communities typically defined good citizenship as focusing on “community service, becoming involved in community groups, and helping others” (p. 123). In short, they conclude that the rural adolescents in their study were more likely to focus on civic engagement and did not see political participation as defining characteristics of “good citizenship.” This is interesting especially since Conover and Searings’ (2000) study of urban, suburban, and rural adolescents noted that urban and suburban adolescents typically noted citizenship as being associated with rights, while rural students associated citizenship with belonging to a community. However, the sample for this study was relatively small with only 100 respondents from each category.

With only a small number of studies done on civic engagement in rural schools it is difficult to highlight how items like parental/guardian /peer discussions and community involvement impact an adolescent’s willingness to be civically engaged as there is no research to allow for a comparison between urban and suburban schools. However, based on what little research has been done it has been concluded that rural schools do indeed provide a unique setting for the study of citizenship. Though this study is

primarily concerned with multilevel citizenship, the fact that this study is placed within the context of rural schools can further contribute to the literature relative to civic engagement in rural schools.

What is the Local Level?

With the focus on using a multilevel model of citizenship it becomes important to define what is meant by the local, national, and global level. When discussing the national level or nation, the term can very easily be defined with the context of the nation state. The global level can also be phrased within simple geographic terms in that global has come to focus on the interconnectivity that transcends beyond any one nation-state (Samapatkumar, 2007; Mitchell & Parker, 2008). That said, defining local is much more complex.

A review of research literature does not provide any clear indication of what is meant by local when looking at civic and political participation. Research that has looked at local involvement has typically focused or used the term community to define their research (Youniss & Yates, 1997b; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Donnelly, Youniss & Atkins, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). However, using the term community is problematic within a multilevel model of citizenship because communities that are engaged in civic and political activities can transcend geographic bridges because of technological advances (Samapatkumar, 2007). Even more problematic is that within rural settings, services and activities that might be easily accessible within an urban or suburban setting might require some distance of travel, which is especially true for rural adolescents (Elder & Cogner, 2000). A review of research literature was even conducted

looking beyond civic and political participation into the fields of computer networking, economics, GIS mapping, and virology. None of these could provide a clear working definition of local that could be used.

In many ways, perhaps local best can be described as an imagined community because it does not fit any set traditional spatial models. In reviewing the research local is always constructed within the terms of race, religion, socio-political, cultural, biological, technological, or economic. Furthermore, the research always implies that local cannot exist without a shared commonality between these constructs. In defining the local level understanding what constructs adolescents used to define this imagined community can contribute to a better understanding of civic and political participation, especially if citizenship no longer conforms to traditional spatial models and commitment levels can vary (Bottery, 2003; Mitchell & Parker, 2008).

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Overview and Rationale of Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed method approach that relies upon both quantitative data collected through a survey and qualitative data collected through interviews. The mixed methods approach benefits researchers by allowing them to better understand the results by asking different questions that may not be possible through the data collected with a qualitative or quantitative approach alone (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that a mixed methods approach allows for superior results and reduces the problems that might be associated with a single approach. Within mixed methods research there are a variety of approaches that can be used as part of a study. This study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach which is defined as “first conducting quantitative research, analyzing the results and then builds upon the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research” (Creswell, 2014, p.16). The benefit of this approach is that it is ideal for conducting research on a new phenomenon or where very little research exists (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). This allows researchers to take the data obtained through a quantitative approach and then further develop a study by designing the type of qualitative data to collect from a given sample (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2005; Creswell, 2014). Though the limitations of this design are the length of time and resources to collect and analyze the data, the benefits are that it has “the straightforwardness and the opportunities for the exploration of the quantitative results in more detail” and is “useful when unexpected results arise” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2005, p. 5). Because of the lack of research

on multilevel citizenship, especially in the U.S., and that this study is using a different methodology to understand how civic educators can increase adolescents' willingness to be civic engaged, an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is a reasonable research method considering that there is a great uncertainty with what the research results might find.

In utilizing an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach this study first focused on designing a quantitative instrument. This instrument, a survey, was designed based on a review of the literature and used to measure rural adolescents' willingness to be engaged at the local, national, and global level and collected relevant data related to person, context, and process factors. Next, the data was analyzed using a multiple linear regression, whereby the results were used to create a semi-structure interview for qualitative analysis following those guidelines suggested by Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2005). Additionally, the semi-structured interview was used to gain a better sense of how adolescents identified themselves within these imagined communities of the local, national, and global level since a semi-structured interview allows for a critical analysis of identity (Adams, Gullotta, & Montemayor, 1992). In conjunction with this, the semi-structured interview was also developed with the purpose to explore those person, context, and process factors that were found to be statistically significant within the local, national, and global multiple linear regression models. The purposes above denote the key benefits of the semi-structured interview in that the overall design allows for flexibility to explore complex phenomena that might yield uncertain results (Galletta, 2013). This process is outlined in more detail in the following sections.

Sample and Procedures Overview

From November 2012 through February 2013 high school seniors were surveyed from twenty high or junior-senior high schools in Eastern Kansas. Using a random stratified sampling method twenty schools were selected from a pool of seventy-two schools.

The reason for selecting twenty schools was to have a total sample size of around six hundred respondents based on school sizes. In using a regression model it is recommended having a sample size of ten for each factor. A sample size of six hundred exceeds this limit and provides an adequate sample size for analysis. Based on previous research this study defined rural school as those that have a high school population of 400 or less and draw from a community population of 5,000 or less (Stern, 1994; Colangelo, Assoulinr, & New, 1999; Roelke, 1996; Martin & Chiodo, 2007; Stewart, 2009).

However, in 2006 the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in conjunction with the Census Bureau created a definition of rural based on the proximity from urbanized areas (Provasnik, et al., 2007). Because of this those high schools that might meet the population requirements above, but were located within the same counties as the Kansas City Metro, Lawrence, and Topeka areas were removed from the study, since their proximity to these urbanized areas might make these areas not rural in the same sense as those that are not within proximity. Seniors at selected schools were asked to complete the survey that was designed for this study. Once the survey results were analyzed, as part of the explanatory sequential mixed method approach twelve respondents participated in an interview from ten different schools to explore the quantitative results in more detail. These interviews were conducted from March 2013 through April 2013.

Survey

The survey was designed based on recent research on civic engagement within the U.S. For each of the three levels there exists a dependent variable, which is a scale of eight items that focused on a variety of different kinds of civic-related activities that adolescents could be involved in. This scale of eight items created an average school that representative of an adolescent's willingness to participate at a particular level that ranges from 1 -5. The eight items used to create this scale/score came from research by Flanagan, Syvertsen and Stout (2007), who analyzed various measures of civic engagement used with adolescents ages twelve-to-eighteen to determine which ones had the highest reliability, could easily be used by researchers and organizations, and were similar to items that had been used in recent research on civic engagement. Some survey items were slightly changed in their wording to meet the needs of this study, but were further developed following the design and evaluation procedures outlined by DeVellis (2003) and Fowler (1995).

The eight survey items that were used for each level's score were only different in that the wording: "local, national, and global," was changed to denote each of the three levels. However, the one exception was that the survey items related to voting at the local and national level was changed at the global level to emphasize learning about politicians and supporting their policies in other countries. The foundation for why these specific items were selected is that they denoted a specific action as part of an adolescent's willingness to participate, as the survey items use the terms "responsibility" and "want to" to denote that the action is based on their belief to complete it (Bandura, 1997, 2001). Furthermore, after the survey was piloted it was analyzed to see if the three

scales were reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha for the local ($\alpha = .826$), national ($\alpha = .853$), and global ($\alpha = .896$) did indeed prove to demonstrate a good level of internal consistency indicating that this scale was reliable. Table 2 indicates these eight items.

Table 2

Items Used to Represent Willingness to Participate at Each Level

1) Know What is Happening at Level
2) Learn About Problems at Level
3) Solve Problems at Level
4) Make a Difference at Level
5) Know About History and Culture at Level
6) Work with Others at Level
7) Learn About Political Candidates at Level
8) Support Political Candidates at Level

In understanding an adolescents' willingness to participate, items were selected that accounted for an adolescent's person, context, and process factors (Wentzel, 2006; Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). According to Torney-Purta, Amadeo, and Andolina (2010), this provides a framework that should enhance an investigators ability to answer research questions by incorporating these three types of factors. As indicated in the previous chapter, in evaluating the literature, fourteen factors were selected as indicated in Table 3.

The eleven contexts and process factors were selected because they could be used within the multiple linear regression models for the local, national, and global levels. One example is that research indicates that discussions about current events with

parents/guardians had a positive influence on adolescents’ civic engagement (McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007). However, while there is a concern over the frequency of

Table 3

Person, Context and Process Factors

Person

Gender
 Ethnicity
 Free or Reduced Lunch

Context and Process

Non-School Setting

Parental Discussions
 Peer Discussions
 Community Involvement – Religious
 Community Involvement – Non- Religious
 Peer Community Involvement
 Parental Community Involvement
 Parental Education

School Setting

Curriculum
 School Opportunities
 Extracurricular Involvement
 College Credit Courses

discussions between parents/guardians and adolescents, the type of discussion that took place as it relates to the local, national, and global level is just as important. Each question within the non-school and school category is scored on a 1 – 5 Likert scale (1 Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree). In addition, in accessing adolescents’ perceptions of school curriculum, a four-item scale was developed for each of the levels, which also demonstrated a good level of internal consistency for the local ($\alpha = .819$), national ($\alpha = .783$), and global ($\alpha = .765$) level.

Forty seniors from three high schools piloted the survey and participated in a follow-up focus group. All three of the focus groups were asked questions about the survey immediately after taking it to get their immediate responses and thoughts. The

last focus group was asked additional questions based on some of the survey results to further gain insight into the survey's design. The focus groups confirmed the validity of several items in that they validated that the meanings of terms and what was being asked was similar to what the instrument was designed to measure. Items that had some ambiguity were redesigned based on the focus group's comments and piloted with later groups to confirm the validity of the improved upon item. The final version of the survey can be seen in Appendix I.

Survey Data Analysis

Based on the four research questions, the first task was to analyze the data and calculate the descriptive statistics. This provided a summary of the sample to denote items like percentage of respondents qualifying for free or reduced lunch and the mean and standard deviation for the respondents' perceptions of having discussion about local problems and current events with a parent/guardian. In addressing research questions two and three, a multiple linear regression was used to model the relationship between the fourteen factors and the dependent variable, which was a composite score relative to an adolescents' willingness to participate at each level. The model that was used to demonstrate this relationship was:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Willingness to Participate at Level} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Gender}) + \\ & \beta_2(\text{Race}) + \beta_3(\text{Lunch}) + \beta_4(\text{Parental Education}) + \beta_5(\text{Parent} \\ & \text{Discussion}) + \beta_6(\text{Parental Involvement}) + \beta_7(\text{Peer Discussion}) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
& + \beta_8(\text{Peer Involvement}) + \beta_9(\text{Community Involvement Religious}) + \\
& \beta_{10}(\text{Community Involvement Non-Religious}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Extracurricular} \\
& \text{Involvement}) + \beta_{12}(\text{School Opportunities}) + \beta_{13}(\text{College Credit} \\
& \text{Course}) + \beta_{14}(\text{Curriculum}) + E
\end{aligned}$$

A separate multiple regression model was then used with those predictors that are statistically significant. This analysis showed what effect the predictors have on the dependent variable that represents a student's score of wanting to be engaged at a particular level. In theory, each of the predictors should have a similar effect size for each of the three levels. As part of research question three, comparisons were made between the multiple linear regressions at the three levels to denote if the effect size and significance of predictors is consistent across the three levels.

Interview Design & Data Analysis

As noted previously, the second part of the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is to develop a qualitative approach after the quantitative data has been collected and analyzed (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2005; Creswell, 2014). An analysis of the survey results revealed that four factors were statistically significant at all three levels. It was decided to focus interview questions related to these factors and how adolescent were engaged in these activities within the various levels for three reasons: 1) These predictors typically had larger effect sizes within the various regression models; 2) The desire to have interviews that would not exceed fifteen minutes so that respondents would not be out of their classroom for very long; and 3) To better understand possible reasons for the significance of various factors so as to gain insight about how to increase

the overall level of efficacy to be civically and politically engaged. Additionally, as part of research questions one and four, interviewees were asked about the various levels to see why they thought involvement in each one was important and how they defined each of these levels. During the interview process additional questions were asked following the semi-structure protocol as outlined by Galletta (2013) to probe interviewees' responses for clarification, understand the meaning of constructs they use, and to have interviewees critically reflect on their experiences. Appendix II illustrates the interview questions that were developed with possible follow-up questions.

Interviewees were selected based on their answer to select survey questions. With four factors shown to be statistically significant at all three levels a pool of possible interviewees were selected based on their answer that they were involved in these four factors and their agreeing to participate in a possible future interview. Twelve interviewees were randomly selected and participated in one-on-one interviews from ten different schools. The interview consisted of ten questions with follow-up questions asked to solicit further responses from respondents as needed. Interviews ranged in length from twelve to seventeen minutes and were recorded digitally. The interviews were analyzed using a content analysis approach, which has been defined as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). Using Bogdan and Biklin (2003) coding categories, the analysis was built upon looking at adolescent perspectives, ways of thinking and relationship or social structures. In looking at these three types of coding categories, Krueger's (2000) framework for interpreting coded data was used to denote both big ideas and words, context, internal consistency, frequency, extensiveness,

specificity, and intensity of comments. During the interview, notes were taken regarding each interviewee's responses and shortly after the interview a reflection was done regarding the overall interview experience as suggest by Galletta (2013). These notes were later used to think more about the interview's tone and demeanor in answering these questions in helping to make sense of the interview experience. Once the interview data was analyzed it was used to affirm or disaffirm the results found in the survey.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine how adolescents' willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level might vary; what factors impact an adolescent's willingness to participate at each level; what pattern of factors existed across all three levels; and how adolescents would define the local, national and global level. This chapter first focuses on answering each of the four research questions, first looking at the survey results, then discussing what was learned through interviews that were conducted. Next, the chapter is followed by a discussion of research findings, which includes what stakeholders can do to increase civic and political efficacy and the use of a multilevel model of citizenship.

In giving an overview of the study, and noted in the previous chapter, from November 2012 through February 2013, twenty out of seventy-two public high and junior-senior high schools were chosen at random to participate in this study. If a school chose not to participate in the study, then another school was randomly selected. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, a date was set to conduct the survey and permission forms for student to participate were sent to the schools. On the day of the survey, those who had returned the signed permission form took a paper form of the survey. A total of 724 out of 909 high school seniors were surveyed for a 79.7% response rate. The number of respondents from each school varied from nineteen to fifty-seven. Respondents were asked at the end of the survey if they were willing to participate in a possible interview to write in their school ID number. Of those respondents who met the

criteria and stated that they would be willing to do an interview, ten total students were initially chosen at random to participate, which ended up coming from ten different schools. However, since two of the schools also had another respondent who met the criteria and indicated on their survey that they were willing to participate in interviews they were also solicited to participate in the interviews. This led to twelve total respondents being interviewed from March 2013 through April 2013.

Table 4 illustrates the demographic breakup for the sample population. Appendix III provides a further break down of the response rate for the survey questions. In looking at the sample population, the demographics were somewhat consistent with what would be representative of the State of Kansas.

However, one area where the sample population was not similar related to those receiving free and reduced lunch, which was used as a measure of SES. Based on this year's Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) numbers, 49.9% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch compared to the 29.7% that were part of this study. Provasnik, et al., (2007) held a national study on rural education and found that approximately one-third of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch attended schools where 25% or less of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. While it is hard to fully explain the differences between the numbers reported by the KSDE and the sample population, perhaps Provasnik's, et al., (2007) research shows that this percentage of students on free or reduced lunch is not outside the realm of possibilities. In conjunction to the number of students on free or reduced lunch, 70.3% of the sample population indicated that their parents or guardian had attended college. This number appears to be rather high and though KSDE does not report this number for

students, Provasnik's, et al., (2007) national study found that 50.5% of fathers and

Table 4

Sample Demographics

<i>Gender</i>	
Male	48.3%
Female	51.7%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	
Hispanic	2.1%
African-American	1.4%
American Indian	2.8%
Asian	0.4%
White, Non-Hispanic	89.6%
Pacific Islander	0.0%
Multiracial	3.7%
<i>Parental Education Level</i>	
Attended College	70.3%
<i>Receives Free or Reduced Lunch</i>	
Yes	29.7%
<i>Taken Dual Credit Classes</i>	
Yes	56.8%

56.1% of mothers had attended college. Based on this, it is difficult to know why this figure is so high within the sample population and whether or not there is a direct correlation between the number of students on free and reduce lunch and parental education attainment. This is especially significant when one considers that the sample population was indeed chosen at random.

Research Question One

Research question one focuses on determining whether rural adolescents were more willing to participate in civically related activities at the local, national, or global level. As discussed in the previous chapter, a scale of eight items was used to measure an adolescent's willingness to participate with a range from 1 – 5. As noted in Table 5, respondents indicated that they were more willing to participate at the national level, followed by the local level, and lastly the global level. An analysis was done to see if the amount of variation within groups was similar to the amount of variation between groups. The global level was found to be statistically significant with a significant level below .001 meaning that respondents are more likely to be willing to participate at the local level than that of the global level.

Table 5

Students' Scores of Willingness to Participate at Each Level (Scale 1 - 5)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Local	3.46	0.628
National	3.53	0.701
Global	2.99	0.82

As part of the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach in answering research question one, interview questions were created to further understand the survey results as to why adolescents would be willing to participate at one level over another. Interview questions were designed that ask interviewees which level they thought was least and more important to be involved in, with follow-up questions to understand why. As Table 6 indicates, of the twelve respondents interviewed, seven stated that the local

level was the more important to be involved in, while eleven answered that the global level as the least important.

Follow-up questions asked interviewees why they felt the level they indicated as most or least important and provided critical data into their reasoning. The interviews

Table 6

Most Important and Least Important Level to Participate in

	Most Important	Least Important
Local	7	0
National	4	1
Global	1	11

were analyzed looking for similar phrasing, key words, frequency, and big ideas (Krueger; 2000) as to why interviewees felt that participating in these levels were most or least important. Based on this analysis, one of the key concepts that interviewees consistently mentioned was that participating in each of these levels had to deal with a feeling of having or lacking a connection to each level. An example of this is that interviewees who indicated that the global level was the least important level to participate in used phrases like “not connected,” “I do not know them,” “they do not care about us so why should I care about them,” “I do not even know what kind of help they need” and “I am not sure how to even help them.” One interviewee even noted the physical geographic disconnect they had with those at the global level in that they were “going to have to go somewhere to get involved” and this would make it difficult. At the same time, the one interviewee who noted that the global level was the most important also noted this theme of connection, by stating, “Everything is linked and if, like, one

thing is not going good in another part of the world then, like, that impacts things in other places.”

The feeling of connection was also an important reason for interviewees selecting the local and national level as most important levels to participate in. One interviewee said the local level was the most important because they “live here” and that “it impacts me more than the other [levels].” Another interviewee described the importance of being involved at the local level because, “There are problems that happen here that only we can take care of.” Another stated that, “A person cannot make a difference at the national or global level, but here they can make a difference here, locally.” An interviewee who choose the national level as the most important stated, “The national level is made up of lots of different local levels and if we can take care of things nationally, then everything will like be okay at the local level.” Interestingly enough, three out of four interviewees used almost this exact same phrasing in describing why the national level was the most important level to be involved in despite being hundreds of miles apart.

This theme within the interviews of having or lacking a connection appears to be a main reason why interviewees indicated that these levels were the most or least important to be involved in. Though the survey results indicated a similar feeling of participation between the local and national level, when pushed to make a choice the twelve interviewees typically choose the local level. But, if adolescent willingness to participate in a particular level is correlated to one’s feeling of connection, then this could have easily have gone another way if another twelve adolescents were interviewed. In many ways, the interviews only reinforce the argument made by Mitchell and Parker (2008) in that adolescents see their own willingness to participate in terms of how they

see themselves as part of these imagined communities. This means that part of understanding a multilevel model of citizenship might mean that one needs to evaluate how an individual feels connected to these various levels.

Research Question Two

The focus of research question two was to find out what person, and context and process factors within school and non-school settings impact rural high school seniors' willingness to be civically engaged at the local, national, and global levels. In answering this question a multiple linear regression was conducted for each level to find out what factors were significant. In discussing these findings, research question two focuses on only those factors that were significant to just one particular level, while research question three will focus on those factors found to be significant across multiple levels and is more robust in discussing the findings.

Looking at the local level, there were a total of eight person, process, and context factors that were found to be statistically important. Table 7 provides the finding of a multiple linear regression with all fourteen variables, while Table 8 provides a multiple linear regression with just those variables that were found to be statistically significant. Only two variables were of significance to just the local level: parent/guardian post-secondary education and dual credit classes.

The most interesting factor that was found to be statistically significant was the negative impact that those who had a parent or guardian who had some kind of post-secondary education training. Previous research found that parental education was a

Table 7

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the Local Level (Full Model)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Constant	15.636	.858	
<i>Variables</i>			
Gender	.110	.314	.011
Parent/Guardian attended College	-.794	.351	-.072*
Free or Reduced Lunch	-.361	.348	-.033
Dual Credit Class	.971	.336	.096**
Non-White	.028	.512	.002
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.614	.174	.132***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.548	.164	.122**
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	.601	.172	.133**
Peers Involvement	.521	.183	.108**
Involvement Non-Religious	-.007	.136	-.002
Involvement Religious	.629	.126	.174***
Involvement Extracurricular Activities	.525	.134	.144***
School Opportunities	.168	.173	.034
Curriculum	.049	.046	.035
$R^2 = .356$			

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

significant factor in predicting adolescent community service (Hart, et al., 2004; Wood, Larson & Brown, 2009). Additionally, parental education attributed to adolescents' having a higher degree of political knowledge that makes them more aware of issues in a

Table 8

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the Local Level (Only Significant Variables)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
Constant	16.277	.649	
<i>Variables</i>			
Parent/Guardian attended College	-.757	.345	-.069*
Dual Credit Class	1.044	.323	.103**
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.669	.170	.144***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.558	.162	.124**
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	.630	.171	.139**
Peers Involvement	.546	.180	.113**
Involvement Religious	.635	.122	.175***
Involvement Extracurricular Activities	.582	.117	.159***
$R^2 = .353$			

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

community, develop a personal interest, leadership and communication skills, and establish networks to discuss community problems (Youniss & Yates, 1997a; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Crystal & DeBell, 2002; Metz & Youniss, 2003).

The literature on citizenship in adolescents is consistent in that parental post-secondary education had a positive impact on participation, which makes this finding interesting considering that 70.3% of respondents had a parent that had some kind of post-secondary education. Nonetheless, Metzger, et al. (2014) recently conducted a study that surveyed middle and high school students from a rural town and found that those who had a parent that did not attend college were more likely to possess patriotic attitudes that were strongly tied to civic participation. This suggests that parental education, as a predictor for civic and political participation, needs to be further studied and evaluated, especially since this and Metzger, et al.'s (2014) study mentioned are based on research conducted in rural schools. However, the importance of this factor is perhaps negated by the fact that the effect size is relatively small in comparison to the other variables.

The second variable that was found to be significant at this level was students who are enrolled in dual credit courses. Rural schools provide an interesting point of analysis when looking at dual credit classes, as they are less likely to offer an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes. This is largely because many of these schools are so small that teachers struggle to just meet being able to offer the regularly required courses that they cannot give up one class period for these types of classes. However, working with regional community colleges, each high school surveyed was able to offer a variety of dual credit classes by integrating them within existing classes.

This was higher than the national average where 86% of rural schools were found to offer dual credit classes (Thomas, Marken, Gray, & Lewis, 2013). Sixteen of the high schools surveyed offer a dual credit course for American history, while ten offered a dual credit class for the American government class. Several studies have found that those who have greater civic knowledge and involved in college preparatory classes or dual credit classes are more likely to be civically engaged and vote later on in life (Delli Carpini & Ketter, 1996; Ketter, 1996; Galston, 2001; Niemi & Junn, 1998, Hart, et al., 2004; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Cohen & Chaffee, 2013). The assumption is that, based on previous research, those enrolled in dual credit classes are on track to attend some kind of higher education training, which correlates to an increased likelihood of voting and political participation. Though being enrolled in dual credit class and parental education attainment have been factors that highly correlated to active civic engagement, the fact that these are shown to only be significant at the local level might mean that these factors need to be reevaluated in better understanding how they might relate or impact civic engagement.

In evaluating the national level, the regression analysis found that seven factors were statistically significant, while one factor was only significant to just the national level. Table 9 provides a multiple linear regression with all of the factors, while Table 10 provides a model with only those that were statistically significant.

The factor that was significant at only the national level was being eligible for free or reduced lunch. Studies on rural schools have argued that rural poverty is different than poverty in suburban and urban areas, in that it is not a factor that indicates academic success and that those who are on free and reduced lunch are just as likely to be civically

Table 9

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the National Level (Full Model)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Constant	11.922	1.088	
<i>Variables</i>			
Gender	.138	.337	.012
Parent/Guardian attended College	-.251	.373	-.020
Free or Reduced Lunch	-.888	.374	-.072*
Dual Credit Class	.521	.356	.046
Non-White	.474	.552	.026
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.855	.194	.169***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.603	.194	.109**
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	1.393	.195	.281***
Peers Involvement	.296	.219	.048
Involvement Non-Religious	-.050	.183	-.009
Involvement Religious	.491	.158	.105**
Involvement Extracurricular Activities	.360	.155	.079*
School Opportunities	-.081	.163	-.016
Curriculum	.310	.063	.160***
$R^2 = .403$			

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

and politically engaged as those not on free and reduce lunch (Hopkins, 2005).

However, in this study, free and reduced lunch did have a negative effect on adolescents' willingness to participate. This finding seems to be consistent with studies done on urban and suburban adolescents that have found this negative impact related to

Table 10

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the National Level (Only Significant Variables)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
Constant	11.919	1.026	
<i>Variables</i>			
Free or Reduced Lunch	-.860	.359	-.070*
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.861	.192	.170***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.649	.178	.117**
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	1.430	.189	.288***
Involvement Religious	.505	.151	.108**
Involvement Extracurricular Activities	.388	.146	.085*
Curriculum	.322	.061	.166***
$R^2 = .398$			

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

civic and political knowledge and involvement (Delli Carpini & Ketter, 1996; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Kahn & Middaugh, 2008; Wilkenfeld, 2009). However, the negative effect that qualifying for free and reduced lunch had is relatively small and did not have the same level of impact as those studies done on adolescents in urban and suburban areas.

This might mean, as other studies have noted, that rural poverty is not the same as urban and suburban poverty and that perhaps the impact of poverty is indeed not as detrimental as these other locations (Stewarts, 2009). Nonetheless, this study's sample has a relatively low portion of students who reported being on free and reduced lunch relative to the national average and if reproduced could provide different findings (Provasnik, et al., 2007).

In looking at those factors that were important at the global level, Table 11 provides the results of a multiple linear regression with all of the factors, while Table 12 provides a model with only those that were statistically significant. Similar to the national level, seven factors were found to be statistically significant, while only one factor was significant at just this level.

The one factor that was significant at only the global level was gender. Within the model being female meant an increase in willingness to participate at the global level with an effect size that was almost ten times greater than that found in the model for the local and national level. This is an interesting finding considering that adolescent males typically have more favorable attitudes towards political engagement (Cicognani, et. al., 2012). However, research has also noted that females typically exhibit more pro-social behaviors and tend to focus more on community service than males (Eisenberg, & Morris, 2004; Metzger & Smetana, 2009). This difference between genders seems to fall into what Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2011) calls "participatory niches." According to

Table 11

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the Global Level (Full Model)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
Constant	9.456	1.099	
<i>Variables</i>			
Gender	1.314	.398	.100**
Parent/Guardian attended College/Trade School	-.416	.438	-.029
Free or Reduced Lunch	-.563	.441	-.039
Dual Credit Class	.817	.414	.062*
Non-White	.767	.647	.036
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.729	.207	.133***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.539	.252	.080*
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	1.739	.211	.316***
Peers Involvement	.699	.269	.099*
Involvement Non-Religious	-.046	.245	-.007
Involvement Religious	.655	.190	.122**
Involvement Extracurricular Activities	.342	.219	.058
School Opportunities	.049	.196	.009
Curriculum	.139	.063	.069*
$R^2 = .391$			

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

the researchers, these niches develop because of how adolescents might be socialized into developing different attitudes towards distinctive types of participation. In this case, females are more likely to be socialized to types of participation that might be seen as

Table 12

Multiple Linear Regression on Willingness to Participate at the Global Level (Only Significant Variables)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
Constant	9.294	1.010	
<i>Variables</i>			
Gender	1.338	.395	.102**
Dual Credit Class	.777	.397	.059 ⁺
Discussion with Parents /Guardians about Current Events	.721	.206	.131***
Parents/Guardians Involvement	.598	.243	.088*
Discussion with Peers About Current Events	1.757	.211	.319***
Peers Involvement	.781	.259	.110*
Involvement Religious	.736	.174	.137**
Curriculum	.143	.062	.072*
$R^2 = .385$			

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

⁺With the complete model this predictor was significant at .0487, however using only those variable that were significant this predictor is not longer significant at .0509.

being more community serviced-base than what might be considered to be more politically based (Hooghe & Stolle, 2004; Cicognani, et. al., 2012). Additionally, the development of this participatory niche could be contributed to the rural context as good citizenship within a rural setting has been defined as helping others (Martin & Chiodo, 2007).

As noted above perhaps one reason why females might be more willing to participate at the global level is because of this participatory niche of community service. One interviewee discussed how she was highly involved and interested in working with an organization that provides support to those women who are trying to leave prostitution in Thailand. She was made aware of this project through a guest speaker as part of a regional church meeting. Later she took the initiative to conduct local fundraisers at her church to raise money through a bake sale and car wash for this organization. In addition, she chose to do a school project about the problem of prostitution in Thailand and those leaving the profession face. The other female interviewee was involved in an organization, also directly related to her church, which raised funds for children to attend schools in Africa. Through two rummage sales the interviewee was able to raise funds for this organization as part of her youth group. These two female interviewees support existing research that denotes that females are more likely to be involved in religious based activities, which in these instances served as an outlet for involvement at the global level (Huebner & Mancini, 2003).

When the interviewees were asked why they thought being involved in these activities was beneficial they provided some interesting responses. The first interviewee denoted that providing support was important because “women are important to society no matter where they are from and should be treated fairly.” The other interviewee noted that providing better education opportunities for those in Africa was important because “everything is linked” and “sometimes you just need to do stuff because it needs to be done.” Both of these responses denote a sense of their participation as being more community service based instead of political and a sense of duty that is found within pro-

social behaviors found in other studies (Eisenberg, & Morris, 2004). Additionally, these interviewees saw their participation as community service, which challenges the notion of what the local, national, and global level may mean or how they are connected. This might mean that the term, “community” might have wider application than community being defined as local or even national.

The purpose of research question two was to identify those factors that might increase an adolescent’s willingness to participate at one particular level. What was interesting was that many person factors like parental/guardian education, enrollment in dual credit classes, and SES that have been part key predictors in determining an adolescent’s willingness to participate civically and politically within large quantitative studies were not that important within a multilevel model of citizenship. Though this provides some interesting insight into a multilevel model of citizenship, this might indicate that the key to increasing overall willingness to participate within a multilevel model of citizenship relies upon context and process factors, which are further explored in research question three.

Research Question Three

Research question three centers on determining which person and context and process factors within school and non-school settings are significant at all three levels in impacting rural adolescents’ willingness to be engaged. Table 13 indicates the various levels and the factors that were significant within them. As Table 13 reveals there were four factors that were significant at all the levels with three factors significant at only two levels. The majority of answering research question three focuses on better understanding

the four factors that were significant at all three levels: 1) Discussion with parents/guardians about problems and current events; 2) Parent/ guardians involved in solving problems; 3) Discussion with peers about problems and current events; & 4) Involved in a religious youth group, non-related to school, that works to solve problems.

Table 13

Predictors Grouped by Level

All Three Levels

Discussion with parent/guardian about problems & current events
Parent/guardian involved in solving problems
Discussion with peers about problems & currents events
Involved in a religious youth group, non-related to school, that works to solve problems

Local and National Level

Involved in a club/organization at school that works to solve problems

National and Global Level

Social studies curriculum focus

Local and Global Level

Peers involved in solving problems

Local Level Only

Parents attended college
Taken college credit classes

National Level Only

Free and Reduced Lunch

Global Level Only

Gender

The first factor to be discussed is adolescents' discussions with parents about current events and problems. Previous research has noted that adolescents who typically discuss current events and political topics with their parents are more willing to be

civically engaged (Hart, et al., 2004; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Survey results indicated that 55.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had discussions with a parent about current events and problems at the local level, while 51.6% indicated the same for the national level and 29.4% for the global level. When looking at the various regression models this predictor was third in its effect size for both the local and global level and the second for national.

Interviews with respondents provided key insights into discussion with parents. Again, using the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach questions were created to asked interviewees what they discussed with their parents with follow-up questions, asking where these discussions took place, frequency, how long they lasted, and how they thought these discussions impacted them. These particular questions were chosen to help explore this phenomenon in more depth. First, the frequencies above indicate that respondents were more likely to discuss items at the local level, followed by those at the national and global. However, analyzing the respondents' interviews noted that the focus of the discussions needed to be placed within a situation of what was currently happening in the news or was newsworthy. In one locale there had recently been a car fatality, while in another there had been a drug overdose of an adolescent, which was the focus of recent discussion between interviewees and their parents. Other interviewees mentioned discussing national issues related to gun regulation and federal government budget issues, or events outside the U.S. related to a devastating tsunami that had recently hit the Philippines, or the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In evaluating the interviews, one trend that developed was that discussion typically focused on those items that had a more direct impact on the interviewees or

their parents. For the majority of cases, this was typically something that happened at the local level that had some kind of implication for those living within the physical local community. However, when there was not a particular important topic at the local level, interviewees mentioned topics at the national or global level. The implication seems to be that these discussions typically focused on items of importance that happened at the local level first. Then, if nothing was happening locally, discussion topics would revert to items at the national or global level. However, having only done twelve interviews and nothing within the research substantiated this observation, this is perhaps an area where more research needs to be conducted to better understand these results.

In further analyzing the interviews, another item that impacted discussion was the watching of local news and cable news channels. Every interviewee indicated that they watched cable news channels, local news, or both with their parents on an almost daily basis. This typically served as means of discussion for the national and global level. However, there was also indication that there was discussion about how these events might also impact them at home. Many stated that this happened in the morning before going to school, in the evening after school, or both. The amount of time engaged in these discussions ranged from fifteen minutes to an hour, with the majority of interviewees stating around thirty minutes daily.

Interviewees were asked how being engaged in these discussions with a parent helps them to want to be involved in the local, national, and global level. In analyzing the interviews, the overall consensus was that these discussions helped them to be better informed about what was happening, with ten of the twelve interviewees using terms like “know” or “learn.” By being informed, interviewees maintained that they were able to

better understand how to solve problems that were happening at the various levels. One interviewee stated that “knowing more about what is happening and talking with my mom and dad makes me feel like since I know what is happening that I can better understand how to help people and make things better.” Another interviewee stated, “It makes me realize that there are things and people who need help and I can either just sit here or maybe try to figure out how I can, like, go solve these things.” This statement supports previous research that found that adolescents who consume news media were not only more likely to have discussions with their parents, but also more likely to want to participate civically and politically (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak 2005; Boyd, Zaff, Phelps, Weiner, Lerner, 2011; Wicks, Wicks, Morimoto, Maxwell, Schulte, 2014).

All of those interviewed indicated that they had an interest in the news and what was going on. More importantly, this interest in the news was because it allowed for interviewees and their parents to share a common interest and discuss things that matter to them. As one interviewee stated, “I really like watching and talking about the news with my parents. It just lets us talk about stuff and I feel like it brings us together.” Erentaitė, et al. (2012) found that personal interest in the news explained the link between discussion about the news with parents and civic engagement. The discussion of current events and problems was indeed an important variable in adolescent willingness to participate at all levels. However, as the statement above suggests, these discussions appear to be reliant upon an atmosphere where news consumption and open discussion are encouraged.

The second factor that was found to be significant at all three levels was having a parent/guardian who was involved in solving problems at the local, national, or global

level. 32.3% of respondents stated that they agree or strongly agree that their parent/guardian were involved in trying to solve local problems, while 10.5% indicated the same for the national level and 6.5% for the global. In looking at the various models this predictor was fourth for the local level, fifth for the national, and sixth for the global level in effect size. So while significant at all three levels, the overall impact is not as large as other predictors within these models.

Interviews conducted with respondents provided further insight into the types of activities parent/guardian were involved in and how the activities impacted their own willingness to be engaged. First, those interviewed provided several types of ways they felt that their parents/guardians were involved in trying to solve different types of issues. These ranged from being a volunteer fire fighter, doing a reading time for small children at the library, or driving a group of adolescents to a religious youth group meeting. However, in evaluating the interviews, one of the major themes is that most of the interviewees saw their parents/guardians' involvement as an extension of their own involvement. An example of this is that one interviewee commented that her mom helped solve local problems by bringing Gatorade, food, and a first aid kit to sporting events that she was involved in. She depicts her mom as the unofficial team nurse and "if anyone gets hurt then mom is there to take care of them and bandage them up." Another interviewee said that his mom was like the youth group chauffeur, while yet another describes his mom as "an unofficial member of the student council." One interviewee described how his dad solved problems by "driving all the way to Tulsa to pick up an extra set of pads so that another player could play football."

With eight of the twelve interviewees describing their parents/guardians'

involvement in solving problems/issues in this manner this description of how their parents/guardians contribute to solving problems slightly diverges from current research and provides an interesting perspective. Previous research has typically defined the predictor of parental involvement in solving problems as civic or political in nature and important because they are providing a model for adolescents to follow (McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Duke, et al. 2009). Only four interviewees discussed a parent's involvement in an activity that was separate from their own. These four items include those mentioned above; working as a firefighter and reading at the library; and serving on the school board and working for an election committee for a county commissioner. In these instances this participation was more of formal process of civic and political engagement, whereas the other eight interviewees mentioned items that were within a rather informal capacity where the parents/guardians simply stepped up to help their son or daughter. Interestingly enough, the four interviewees who commented that their parents were involved in these more formal forms of solving problems indicated that they were not involved with their parents/guardians in any of these activities directly.

The survey results between those who had parents/guardians who were involved in these formal and informal activities at solving problems were compared to see if there were any differences in their survey results. There did not appear to be any differences in these results, but with a relative sample of only twelve, any differences between the two would be hard to detect. This might be an area where future research needs to evaluate in distinguishing these formal and informal types of activities and how they impact adolescent willingness to be engaged.

The third item that was found to be significant at all three levels was discussion

with peers about current events and problems. The percentage of students who said they agree or strongly agree that they had these discussions with their peers at the local level (49.4%), national level (43.7%) and global level (27%) was slightly lower than having discussions with parents/guardians. Despite this, the effect size for this predictor was the largest in both the national and global models with an effect almost double for the national level and more than double for the global level.

Because of this finding, one of the key focuses in the interviews was to determine the motivation for these discussions. First, all twelve interviewees stated that the vast majority of these discussions happened within the classroom setting where teachers would introduce current events and problems and that these discussion continued into other parts of the school and non-school setting. Based on interview responses the motivation for these discussions was that they were part of the curriculum. Eleven of the twelve interviewees stated that these discussions were largely introduced in their social studies classes, with one stating that discussions happened in their English language arts class. Since all of the respondents were seniors and currently taking the 12th grade social studies class of American government, a discussion of current events and problems appeared to be logical. However, all of the interviewees indicated that since the school only had one or two social studies teachers, discussing current event and topics was something their teachers did in all of the classes they taught.

Since interviewees indicated that discussion of current events and problems was part of the curriculum, follow-up questions were asked to see how teachers integrated it within their curriculum. If anything was consistent with the responses it was that teachers vary greatly in their approach. These included showing CNN Student News

followed by a 10-minute discussion of what was watched, to teachers having students read a news story from CNN, the New York Times or the BBC followed by a discussion; students bringing in news topics and sharing with the class for a 20-minute discussion, choosing a news topic and writing a brief summary paragraph about that topic and then discussing them; and students reading about a current problem and then writing a one to two-page response in how to address the issue. In addition, responses indicated that there was inconsistency with the frequency of how often they discussed current event and problems. Some indicated that they did this almost daily to once a month, but the frequency seemed to be tied to the type of activity that revolved around getting students to discuss. Though current research indicates that the lack of discussions is detrimental to future participation, the positive aspect of discussing current events on civic and political participation does not indicate a threshold of when being involved in this activity correlates to these positive impacts (Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2004).

That said, what was interesting was that some of the respondents from the same school as those interviewees disagreed about having discussions about current events and problems with their peers. In looking at the ten schools that the interviewees came from, 22.3% of respondents indicated they disagreed on having discussions with their peers about local current events and problems, with 23.8% indicated the same for the national and 45.8% for the global level. It is difficult to know why these respondents felt differently than their peers. But, considering that the interviewees indicated that their teachers had integrated discussion about current events and problems throughout their high school career and respondents were in the middle of their senior year it could be said that those who stated discussion did not happen did not consider these discussion as

important or meaningful as those interviewed. Seeing how the respondents in this study were high school seniors one could argue that those surveyed already have established what is of prestige and importance, which means they would be less likely to be engaged or consider discussions about current events and problems significant because maybe they already had a feeling of disconnection to the particular level that the discussion related to (Bandura, 1997; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007).

Interviewees' discussion and description of the classroom setting does give some insight into how and why these discussions might be important. One interviewee described the classroom setting as a "safe place that is drama-free where we can, like, express how we feel even if it might be different from everyone else, even the teacher." Another stated, "You can really say whatever you want, but you better be ready to back up what you say." These statements support previous research in that having an open classroom environment promotes student involvement and interest in political discussions (Flanagan, et al., 2010). Campbell (2007) found that classroom settings that did not have much diversity also foster an atmosphere that was more open to discussion than those that had a diverse group of students. A characteristic of rural schools is that they are typically not very diverse and could help to further explain the importance of this "safe" atmosphere that fosters open discussion. However, non-white respondents had very similar response rates in having discussions about current events and problems as their white peers, which demonstrates that this subgroup was not alienated from being involved in these activities.

The last item that was found to be statistically significant across all three levels was involvement in a religious youth group that works to solve problems. 23.8% of

respondents indicated that they were involved in a religious youth group that worked to solve to local problems, while 17.6% indicated the same for the national level and 16.2% for the global level. The effect size of this predictor differed substantially in the various models. For the local level it had the largest effect size of all the predictors, but for the national level mode it was fifth and second for the global level.

An analysis of those involved in religious youth groups and other group that worked to solve problems at the various levels provide some interesting insight into how these groups function. Previous research has indicated that within rural communities, church youth groups provide the most common means of civic engagement with 25% - 38% of previous samples being involved in youth groups (Andolina, et al., 2003; Smith & Denton, 2005; Ludden, 2011; Sharp, Tucker, Baril, Van Gundy, & Rebellon, 2014). The survey used in this study did not ask if respondents were part of a religious youth group, or other groups, but rather if they were part of a religious youth group that was trying to solve problems. So this makes determining the percentage of respondents involved in a youth group difficult. That said, Ludden's (2011) analysis of rural adolescent engagement in civic activities denotes that rural adolescents "were [more] involved in youth groups than in civic activities in school or in the community." Table 14 illustrates the percentage of respondents who indicated that they were involved in a religious youth group, a community organization, or an extracurricular activity that tried to solve problems at the different levels. As the table indicates, the percentages of solving problems between the various groups and levels varies greatly and appears to be contrary to Ludden's findings. However, both being involved in religious youth groups and extracurricular actives were both significant predictors in the local and national model

Table 14

Percentage of Respondent Involvement in Solving Problems within Various Groups Levels

<i>Religious Youth Groups</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Local	23.8%
National	17.6%
Global	16.2%
 <i>Community Organizations</i>	
Local	24.5%
National	10.5%
Global	7.5%
 <i>Extracurricular Activities</i>	
Local	56.4%
National	25.8%
Global	11.7%

with very similar effect sizes, while only religious youth groups at the global level was significant. So, while more respondents may be involved in extracurricular activities that solve problem at the local and national level, religious youth groups provide an advantage in increase efficacy at the global level.

Interviewees detailed different types of activities that they were involved in with their youth group that met at least once a week. These activities included raising funds to support schools in Africa, providing services for the elderly, and cleaning local parks. The frequency of these activities varied among those interviewed ranging from once a month to twice a year. The only consistent activity between those interviewed was collecting food and toys for needy families during Thanksgiving and Christmas, which benefited local families. Four of the interviewees stated that they helped to raise funds for overseas

missionary efforts, while three interviewees indicated that they did fund raisers to help support others in their youth group and those not part of their youth group or congregation to attend a church sponsored summer camp. These two different activities provide a unique understanding of helping to solve problems in that it extends to areas that may not be traditionally seen as civic or political participation. Guo, et al., (2013) found that different types of religious affiliation impacted the type and frequency of volunteer efforts. This provides a possible explanation for not only the frequency and type of activities interviewees were engaged in, but also denotes a limitation in the study that religious affiliation was not considered when evaluating the impact of religious youth groups that work to solve problems.

Interviewees described their religious youth group experience in positive terms because of the relationships they formed. First, eight of the twelve interviewees noted that their parents were also activity involved with their work in their religious youth group. One interviewee described her experience as, “very rewarding because not only am I helping others out, but it is also like time that I can spend with my mom and dad. It is like they know this is important and they are going to help me get this done.” Another interviewee stated working with her mom, who was an assistant youth pastor, “is great because she listens to us and how we think we should, like, organize and get stuff done with whatever project we are doing.” Other interviewees had similar statements in working with youth group leaders. “Outside of my mom and dad, my youth pastor is probably the person I look up to the most. If I ever need anything, he would do anything to help me just like I was one of his own boys.” These statements support previous research in that the success of religious youth group and other programs revolve around

the development of a close relationship between parent/guardian and non-parent/guardian youth leaders and the adolescents they work with (Elder & Cogner, 2000).

Just as important as these relationships all twelve interviewees felt that these activities they were involved in were making a difference. When an interviewee was asked why he felt being involved in these activities was important he responded, “People should just help people when they are in need. I mean, you cannot help everyone, but you can try and do something even if it is a little thing. I guess this is just the way I was taught and how me and everyone else I hang out with in my youth group think.”

Previous studies are consistent in that parents, peers, and youth leaders provide the models for civic and political behavior (McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Wilkenfeld, 2009; Duke, et al., 2009). Those who were interviewed for this study only seem to reconfirm these findings in that they were simply “taught,” “doing what is expected,” or just “that is just what we do here” when it came to solving these problems as part of their youth group.

Research Question Four

The last research question is concerned with how interviewees define each level, but specifically the local level. In defining the national and global level, one interviewee defined them simply as, “The national level is the U.S. and the global level is everything that is outside of the U.S.” Interviewees were able to very easily define these two levels similar to that above within the context of geographic political boundaries. In short, the national level was the political boundaries of U.S., while the global level was the area outside of the U.S.

Defining the local level was much more abstract in that it did not conform to a set of geographic boundary like that of the national and global level. In order to illustrate this point, there are four examples from the interviews that best demonstrate this concept. In defining the local level, one interviewee said that she felt that the area where she lived and went to school was part of the local level, but she was also involved in a youth group that was more than an hour away and that this town was also part of the local level. In a series of follow up questions she indicated that the area between her school and where she lived and the town where her youth group was located was not local. Her reason for considering these two areas local, even though they were physically separated geographically was that “these are places where I am involved and care about.”

Similar to that above, another interviewee described the local level as a mixture of where he did school extracurricular and religious youth group activities. This interviewee was active in Future Farmers of America (FFA) that did a lot of activities at the school farm next to the school and other farms that were within the school district boundaries. The religious youth group that the interviewee was involved in was located in a town next to where the interviewee lived that was not part of his school district. He described his involvement with the youth group as working with students who did not all necessarily go to his school and doing activities within that town’s immediate area. The reason for being part of this youth group was because he lived out in the country and that this town and church were actually closer to where he lived than a similar church and town where he went to school. This interviewee really struggled to define local level because being involved in these two activities meant he was “part of two different

towns.” Eventually he concluded that the local level was for him both where he did stuff with the FFA and his religious youth group.

Another interviewee described the local level as the sports conference her school was a part of. The reason for this description was that she was involved in every single sport and these sports were a big part of her life. She stated, “I really love playing sports. I enjoying so much playing games here and going to other places and playing. My family comes and watches me . . . and I have actually made friends with those on other teams because like I play against them since I was like in 7th grade.” She further indicated that for as long as she could remember she had been traveling to these other towns and playing sports and that sports had taught her so many things about herself and the importance of practice and hard work.

The last example also struggled to try and define the local level and had to revert to the use of geographic terms to help explain it. Here the interviewee defined the local level as the northwest part of the county she lived in and the southwest portion of the county north of where she lived. The reason for choosing these specific regions was, “this is where me and my friends and cousins hangout.” She indicated that she spent a lot of time with her cousins who lived in the county north of her, who attend a different school district. Her cousins were also part of her youth group that was close to her home. She stated, “I love my cousins; we are so close and, like, we do pretty much everything together . . . they are involved in my youth group and when I have STUCO stuff they will, like, come down and help me”

Similar to the above examples, the remaining interviewees described the local level as a place where they were actively involved. Based on this, the local level can be

defined as the area where people are actively participating. However, interviewees choose to define the local level as connected to the participation that was the most meaningful to them. Many of these interviewees, like the examples above, denoted the importance of the relationships they had with those whom they were doing the activities in helping define the local level. Additionally, when asked to justify their definition they all expressed that they cared about these areas and the activities they did there. This means that though interviewees are thinking of the local level within a geographic term that takes on the meaning of local, they are defining it within the context of an imagined community that has no physical boundaries to which they are connected. In the *Encyclopedia of Community: From Village to the Virtual World* (2003), the entry on communitarianism notes that community has two specific characteristics: 1) Relationships among a group of individuals that reinforce one another; 2) A commitment to shared values, norms, and meanings. As interviewees described and justified their definition of the local level, these two points become evident. This suggests that the terms, “community” and/or “local” have even more complex definitions than simply a place where people live together (Moore, 2000).

A limitation of this study in defining the local level is how interviewees were selected. As mentioned previously, interviewees were selected based on their positive response to the four predictors that were found to be statistically significant at all three levels. This means that all of the interviewees were engaged in a religious youth group and coincidentally were also all involved in extracurricular activities. Adolescents who are involved in few or no activities could provide different insights into a definition of the local level. However, as some of those interviewed noted that the local level also

constitutes the area where they socialize with friends. Hence, perhaps those that are not involved in religious youth groups, community organizations, or extracurricular activities might define local as the area where they hang out and socialize with friends.

Discussion of Findings

The following sections provide a broader discussion of each of the four predictors that were found to be significant at each of the three levels. If there is a general concern for increasing adolescent efficacy, then understanding these items will be of most concern to advocates. A discussion of the implications of defining the local level and utilizing a multilevel model of citizenship follows later. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion of how the four predictors can be utilized to increase adolescent willingness to participate, and ultimately what a multilevel model of citizenship means in evaluating adolescents' willingness to participate.

Peer Discussions

One of the substantial findings of this study was the impact that discussion with peers had on adolescents' willingness to participate at all three levels. In comparison to all other factors, peer discussion about current events had effect sizes that were close to double for the national level and more than double for that of the global level. 49.4% of respondents indicated that they had discussions about local problems and current events with their peers. Prior to conducting interviews, one could theorize that these discussions happened outside of school within a context that was more social than one that was instructionally- or classroom-based. However, interviewees all stated that these discussions started

within a classroom situation where the information for the discussion topic was introduced as part of the overall curriculum. Furthermore, interviewees stated or implied that many of these discussions did not stop within the classroom and continued throughout the school day and later outside of school. This broad scope of peer discussion has implications for those concerned with overall decline of civic and political participation. At the same time, a number of respondents from the same schools as those interviewed indicated that they did not engage in any form of discussion, which raises some valuable questions about the nature of these discussions and how they impact adolescents' willingness to participate.

The initial reason why this finding is so interesting is that previous research which had utilized large data sets typically found that other factors had larger effect sizes than having discussions with peers (Delli Carpini & Ketter, 1996; & Niemi & Junn, 1998; Hart, et al., 2004; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Duke, et al., 2009). Within schools the overall focus has centered on political knowledge as a factor of civic participation, with the idea being that if one can increase this knowledge base, then students would be more likely to be politically engaged. Other research has looked at extracurricular activities and service-learning opportunities as ways by which schools can increase overall civic and political participation (Glanville, 1999; Zaff, et al., 2003; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Hart, et al., 2007; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). When looking at the research on classroom discussion, the focus has largely been on the general classroom climate and not the overall impact it might have on an adolescent's willingness to participate, like those factors mentioned above (Torney-Purta, 1995; Bremen, 1997; Torney-Purta, 2002; Andolina, et al., 2003; Flanagan, et al., 2007; Campbell, 2007;

Flanagan, et. al., 2010; Boyd, et al., 2011; Wicks, et al., 2014). This makes it difficult to know what activities might work best for one or several of the various levels, especially when one considers that interviewees detailed a variety of instructional approaches that their teachers used on a consistent or inconsistent basis. It might make sense that teaching methods that require adolescents to research a current event or problem and write a reflection might have a bigger impact than an assignment to simply watch CNN Student News followed by a brief discussion. However, if the latter is done regularly and the other done once or twice a year do they thereby become comparable in how they might impact adolescents? Accordingly, if these larger projects are only done twice a year might some students be less engaged in these discussions than those who might watch CNN Students News two to three times a week? Relevant to this is determining how regularly these discussions might focus on a local, national, or global level. Additionally, can focusing discussion items on a particular level over a certain time period increase a student's willingness to participate at that level more so than the others? The research literature is silent about these and a variety of other questions about adolescent discussions with peers in the classroom.

However, in analyzing the interview data, interviewees do provide some insight into activities that might work. Those interviewed not only mentioned that many of the current events and problems discussed were items they were unaware of before the discussion, but noted that their teachers also forced them to look at discussion items from a different perspective that might challenge their own views and belief system. These types of discussions perfectly align with Dalton's (2008) and Parker's (1999) characteristics of citizenship in that individuals must be willing to participate in a

discussion of items as a form of action within a democratic framework. This is further supported by research that observations and involvement in certain activities can motivate individuals to mimic certain behaviors (Holland, et al., 1998, Rubin, 2007; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007), but suggests a similar view as found by Campbell (2008), that is it not the amount of civic or political knowledge presented to adolescents, but rather the environment and nature of the discussion that does happen.

At this point, one can only speculate on the specific details of the environment and nature that might foster discussions that are the most beneficial in increasing an adolescent's willingness to participate, but the interview data does provide insight into how discussion help to develop a sense of connection to the imagined geographical or social communities which represent the local, national, and global levels. In many instances, interviewees denoted how discussions served to inform them about situations they knew little about or to look at views they might not have considered. Researchers argue that adolescents who are able to consider perspectives beyond their own go on to develop pro-social behaviors and interactions that can positively benefit a community (Erikson, 1968; Eisenberg, 1990; Mussen & Eisenberg, 2001). The development of these pro-social behaviors and interactions in turn allow adolescents to establish a connection to the imagined community that leads to the development of attitudes and beliefs that solidify their identity and what they view to be important (Eisenberg, 2001). This possibly explains why respondents who stated that they did not have discussions with their peers, despite being from schools where interviewees indicated they did, in that they had already form a connection or disconnection to these imagined communities

since they had already determine what was of most important to them (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007).

Additionally, if one's willingness to participate at a particular level is related to their view of connection to these imagined communities, then perhaps there is nothing more important to building these connections than understanding the issues and problems faced by individuals at these levels. The interviewee who was involved in helping those leave prostitution in Thailand is perhaps one anecdotal example of how a discussion and exposure to a problem at a certain level can motivate one's feeling of connection and involvement. This supports more recent findings by Kahne, Crow and Lee (2013), who notes that "open discussion" promoted adolescents' desire to be more active in their communities, which is consistent with other previous research about the overall effect discussions have had on adolescent willingness to participate (Huckfold, Johnson, & Sprague, 2004). In short, discussions served as a means to help adolescents feel connected or willing to participate within a particular imagined community.

Parent/Guardian Discussions and Solving Problems

Though the survey data provided useful information as to whether respondents had discussions with their parents/guardians and were working to solve problems at the various levels, it was the interview data that provided key illumination regarding these factors.

The first of these was the role of news media within the discussion. Previous research has only considered whether or not adolescents who consume news have discussions with their parents, and what types of news media adolescents consumed,

defined within broad terms of online, news channels, and print (Shah, et al., 2005; Pasek, Kenski, Romer, & Jamieson, 2006; Boyd, et al., 2011; Wicks, et al., 2014). In many cases, these studies treat discussion with parents and news media consumption as being mutually exclusive, but in discussion with interviewees these items share a symbiotic relationship where adolescents were consuming TV news with their parents, which fostered the discussions they had. Several interviewees noted that they did not necessarily watch one specific news channel, but rather channel-surfed and watched whatever was interesting whether it be local news, or cable news channels, such as: Fox News, CNN, or MSNBC. None of the interviewees mentioned items they read online or in the newspaper as serving as the catalyst for discussion they had. The implication is that the key to these discussions is having a location where both the adolescent and parent are being exposed to the news information at the same time and then allowing them to respond to the news through discussion.

Last, the frequency of these discussions was on a daily basis. Previous research had only used Likert-scale items where respondents noted discussions or news consumption by selecting responses akin to “most of the time” or “hardly at all” (Boyd, et. al., 2011), while some have used a distinction of “most days” or “less often” (Pasek, et. al., 2006). This research provides insight in knowing how often adolescents consume certain types of media, but with no real indication regarding the amount of time spent in these discussion with parents. The fact that this is happening daily, and in some cases twice daily with the morning and evening news, provides a new view into the importance of discussion. One limitation in this study, which future researchers might consider

exploring is the frequency and amount of time spent discussing items related to the local, national, or global level.

In addition to discussing current problems and events with parents, having a parent who was involved in helping solve problems and issues was also an important factor. Based on the survey results, 32.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their parent/guardians were involved in trying to solve problems at the local level, while only 11.2% indicated the same for the national level and 6.3% for the global level. In looking at the interview results, one theme that was implied by interviewees was that many saw their parent/guardian involvement in helping to solve problems as a continuation of their own activities. At first, this appeared to be odd, as previous research that has evaluated parent/guardian involvement has evaluated these items in terms of political activism or involvement in non-school related community organizations that were not directly related to their children (Hart, et al., 2004; Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009). In trying to make sense of interviewees' responses, it is important to note that Provasnik, et al's. (2007) national study of rural schools found that parents in rural locations were more likely to attend school activities than those in urban or suburban areas. With this in mind, researchers have concluded that a key characteristic of rural school success is that schools serve as the nucleus of civic and cultural activities in rural communities (Ronan Herzog & Pittman, 1995; Lyson, 2005; Barley, & Beesley, 2007). Because of this it is reasonable that respondents' parents would be highly involved in activities revolving around the school. Interviewees' depiction of their parents as the team nurse, youth group chauffer, and an unofficial member of student government only reinforces this theory. The rural setting also perhaps

explains why parents were over three times more likely to be involved at the local level than the national level; and five times more when comparing local level involvement to the global level.

Many interviewees saw their parents' involvement as an activity that allows them to strengthen their relations with their parents. Earl, Hargreaves, and Ryan (2013) note that within early adolescents there is a transition period where the importance of a relationship with parents and other adult role models becomes less important than relationships with peers. However, it was clear with interviewees that parental relationships were just as important to them as peer relations with their parents being equally committed to them as well. One explanation is that in many ways parent involvement as described by interviewees is similar to Erikson's (1968) generativity, which refers to the concern of future generations and is expressed through teaching and working with adolescents to make sure that current values and systems are maintained. The words of one interviewee resonates this concept very well; "My parents helping me is probably one of the most important things to me. I hope that one that one day I can do this for my kids." The concept of generativity placed within a rural setting might explain why interviewees describe their relationship with parents in such a manner.

In many ways, parental discussion and involvement are separate functions of the adolescent-parent relationship, but they both in turn support the healthy development of pro-social behaviors by providing role models as process factors. However, these factors follow within the context area as Andolina, et al., (2003) argues that is it not so much the activities of parents, but rather a healthy home environment that exists to allow these conversations and activities to flourish and take shape. That said, whether it is the

process of seeing one's parents involved in these activities or having a context where these activities take place, the key is that opportunities for these actions need to exist within a nourishing environment.

In doing so, the interviewees described that they were able to make connections with their parents and by enlarge the imagined community that their parent were involved in. If parents/guardians provide the model behaviors for adolescents, then parents/guardians are helping to foster the connection that adolescents have with various imagined communities. While most of the research is consistent in that parents/guardians are providing this modeling, what might be implied based on the research findings is that a parent/guardian's involvement in a child's activities might also help the adolescent develop a stronger connection to the imagined community that they are involved in. Erikson's (1968) generativity provides a framework to explain this phenomenon in that by parents/guardians working with adolescents, they are reinforcing the connection to an imagined community that the parent/guardian feels is important. Though this sounds logical, this is yet another area where future research might want to evaluate parental/guardian involvement.

Religious Youth Groups

Survey results indicated that 23.8% of respondents were involved in a religious youth group that worked to solve to problems at the local level, while 17.6% indicated the same for the national level, and 16.2% for the global level. Though previous research does not indicate adolescents' involvement at a particular level as part of a religious youth group, it does note that religious youth groups typically provided the main source

for civic participation within rural communities (Andolina, et al., 2003; Ludden, 2011; Sharp, et al., 2014). However, this study found some different results when utilizing a multilevel approach in that respondents indicated that youth groups provided fewer opportunities to solve problems at the local level than community organizations and extracurricular activities did. At the same time religious youth groups provided more opportunities to be involved at solving global problems than community organizations and extracurricular activities. This comparison is important when one considers that with the global level model youth groups had the second highest effect size, while at the local and national level the effect size was marginal.

A possible reason for why religious youth groups have such a dramatic impact on overall levels of efficacy is because of the attitudes those involved in these activities possess. In evaluating interviewees' statements, many implied that they were doing what they were taught or expected to do and could not provide any clear reason other than this. In using the explanatory sequential mixed methods, interview questions were designed to only look at those factors that were statistically significant at all three levels. Because of this, interviewees were not asked to talk about their involvement in community organization or extracurricular activities. However, in those instances when interviewees did mention or bring up their other non-religious youth group activities they were involved in they did not discuss them with the same sense of duty as being involved with their religious youth groups. Though there was no specific wording or theme that denoted this enthusiasm, several of the notes taken during these portions of the interview noted the interviewees "passion" or "excitement" when discussing their religious youth group involvement.

Perhaps a key reason why interviewees described their religious youth group activities as being so meaningful was because of the relationships they established. Though many of the interviewees did discuss being part of different religious affiliations, frequencies and types of involvement, a consistent theme became apparent from the interviews in that these activities were important because of the relationship that developed between parents/guardians and youth leaders. Previous research denotes that despite being part of different denominations, that motivation for religious youth group involvement stems from placing a high value on meeting a religious dogma to serve and help fellow individuals (Guo, et al., 2013). However, the interviewees did not indicate any sense of religious principle as a chief motivator. The interview findings rather correspond with those findings made by Elder & Cagner (2000) that the success of religious youth group programs are because of the close relationships that develop between adolescents and adults. Perhaps, just like parent/guardian involvement, the key to religious youth groups helping to foster a connection to various imagined communities also goes back to Erikson's (1968) notion of generativity, which in this context also expands to religious youth leader as well. This is a place where future research might want to reevaluate in that how the impact of religious dogma and the relationship with parents/guardian and religious leader impact the connection that adolescent makes to various levels.

Another issue that needs to be considered when evaluating religious youth group activities is missionary efforts. Four of those interviewed indicated that they helped to solve global level problems by helping raise funds for missionaries work in other countries. However, follow-up questions were not asked during the interviews to find out

what was actually meant by *missionary work*, though they all explicitly used this exact term. Additionally, three of the interviewees represented different denominations so missionary work could mean anything from proselyting to humanitarian work, and could represent someone who is native to that country or someone who traveled there. When taking this into consideration that missionary work was mentioned as a way of helping to solve problems at the global level this might explain why the number of respondents reporting being involved in solving problems at the global level was higher than those involved in community organizations and extracurricular activities. The research literature in this regard does not help much either in that it only indicates that religious youth groups provide the main source by which adolescents are civically engaged (Andolina, et al., 2003; Smith & Dean, 2005; Ludden, 2011; Sharp, et al., 2014). At the same time, the one possible problem that involvement with religious youth groups as a way to foster the development of pro-social behaviors that help to form connections to these imagined communities might be when it takes on the form of proselytizing efforts. Though none of the interviewees mentioned this specifically, various stakeholders may have issue with focusing on these types of efforts and whether or not this is a form of civic engagement.

So What is Local?

Because of the lack of research in defining the various levels as part of a multilevel model of citizenship the fourth research question focused on how interviewees would define each level. The national and global level both appeared to be the easiest levels for interviewees to define, but local yielded many different results that helped to

paint a picture of local as not being so concrete. The simplest definition that could be determined based on interviewee responses was an area that constitutes where an individual chooses to be engaged in civic, political, and/or social activities. In many ways, this definition is just as ambiguous as notions that were conceived prior to interviews with respondents. However, if anything, it denotes that local cannot simply be quantified in the same manner as the national or global level, which is determined by set political and physical boundaries. For example, one interviewee detailed her notion of local where two areas that were not physically connected, but places where she was active in.

What this suggests then about local level is that it is defined by how and what interviewees felt connected to as part of this imagined community. As stated above, the four factors that were significant at all three levels are important because they help to foster a connection between the adolescent and the imagined community. In very much the same way, interviewees defined the local level in terms of how they were connected to the local level. The one major different thought between the local versus national and global, is that while the national and global levels focus on a connection of civic and political actions, interviewees denoted that the creation of the local level also encompassed a social aspect. At this junction, speculation on the conceptual framework of how the local level might be constructed is all that can be done. However, the way that adolescents defined local as something that is not necessarily politically constructed, and included social aspects of their lives as part of the creation of the imagined community of the local provides the beginning step to its formation.

The one problem and limitation of this study is determining what the local level might be for those who are not involved in school or non-school related activities. In short, the local level perhaps then becomes defined by where an individual is socially engaged.

When considering an individual who is not involved in organized activities, it could be assumed that this person would have friends and the area that they might consider their hangouts or where they socialized could be considered local. This particularly makes sense when one considers that “community” is determined by relationships and “shared values, norms, and meanings” (Christen & Levinson, 2003). Again, given how this study was conducted this is just an educated guess based on the results. However, it does give a point of reference especially when thinking back to other studies that imply a focus on the local level.

Increasing Adolescent Willingness to Participate – Schools

A large number of studies that look at factors relating to civic and political participation in adolescents and other items like students’ participation and education outcomes always denote that non-school context and process factors have more of a dynamic impact than school context and process predictors (Delli Carpini & Ketner, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Atkins & Hart, 2003; Hart, et al., 2004; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007). However, using a multilevel model of citizenship in this study has revealed that schools could directly impact the school-related factor of peer discussion.

As interviewees indicated, discussion with peers about current events and problems were based on items that were introduced by their teachers as part of the overall curriculum. This is particularly interesting since the majority of studies treat peer

discussions as a non-school factor because the assumption is that these discussions happen outside of the school environment (Metz & Youniss, 2003; Wilkenfeld, 2009). This means that one way to perhaps increase overall adolescents' willingness to participate would be to foster these discussions of current events and problems within the curriculum.

At this point it is difficult to know which types of curriculum activities and the frequency of these activities might be best at fostering adolescents' discussions with peers. This is primarily because the interviewees all gave various examples of the types of discussion activities and the frequency at which they happened. Nonetheless, previous research has provided us with the insight regarding discussions that have been the most beneficial to students. The best discussions are planned out ahead of time and well managed, promote student willingness to be involved, allow students to express their views in a safe and hostile free environment, and lead to the development of critical thinking skills (Campbell, 2007; Hadjioannou, 2007; Flanagan, et al., 2010, Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014).

Because of how the overall context leads to the development of pro-social behaviors and establishes what is of "prestige and popularity" that in turn correlates to an adolescent's willingness to participate, then discussions perhaps need to take place that foster a safe and healthy setting rather than focusing on the development of critical thinking skills (Bandura, 1997). Though this sounds odd and perhaps insinuates that the two are mutually exclusive, what is being implied is that the creating of a safe and healthy setting should be the primary concern of educators in utilizing discussions about current events and problems as part of the classroom curriculum. If authentic classroom

discussions are to take place that focus on the development of interpersonal relationships, then adolescents need to feel comfortable in making themselves vulnerable by expressing their opinions and asking fellow students to develop thoughts about these topics (Raider-Roth, 2005; Hadjioannou, 2007). This view is contrary to the current education climate where assessments largely focus on skill development and content knowledge. However, when one considers that discussions that focus on increasing adolescents' ability to think critically at the expense of the environment (by not fostering interpersonal relationships), discussions are typically not healthy and negate the development of pro-social behaviors (Hayes & Devitt, 2008). The development of helping adolescents establish pro-social behaviors that form as the connection to these imagined communities must therefore have a firm foundation from which to begin. If a foundation cannot be established from the beginning, then the purpose of the discussions might become meaningless in its overall impact on adolescents. This becomes even more vital when one considers that 22.3% of respondents indicated they did not have discussions with their peers about the local level, while 26.8% indicated the same for the national level and 35.8% for the global level. So while it is difficult to know what types of instructional activities can best foster these peers discussion at this point, establishing a safe and healthy setting is but a start for educators to prompt peer discussions about current events and problems.

Increasing Adolescent Willingness to Participate – Non-School

While educators can easily control those factors that happen within their classrooms, non-school context and process factors are a bit trickier. Nonetheless, discussions with parents and parental involvement are items that educators can promote.

Since adolescent-parent discussions happen within a setting where both are consuming news media, instructional activities could be designed that might promote these discussions. This could take on the form of getting adolescents to watch the news at home and then prompt them to get their parent's insight into what was discussed. As part of the assignment, adolescents could then write a reflection and even include how their parents may have had similar or different views from their own. Although this type of activity might not work in every household, it is an example of one way that discussions with parents can be fostered and developed.

Since those interviewed depicted that they saw their parents trying to solve problems by being engaged in activities they were involved in, then promoting parent/guardian involvement is also another avenue that educators can also encourage. The research is consistent in that parental involvement is a key to success in all types of avenues related to education, but many cannot be involved because of economic and social factors (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hornby & LaFaele, 2011). Schools may not be able to overcome these obstacles, but can make attempts to increase parental involvement. Stacer and Perrucci (2013) found that parents who were consistently informed by schools about how they could assist in school-related activities typically became more involved. Within rural schools this would be an easy step in promoting parental involvement, especially considering that 71.4% of respondents noted that schools provided opportunities for them to be involved at the local level. As schools

become more inviting and welcome parental support, the goal would be to have more parents acting as the “team nurse” or “unofficial member of the student council.”

Participation in religious youth group activities is the item that would be the most difficult for educators to promote. However, educators can be supportive of those adolescents who might choose religious youth groups as a means of civic engagement. The foreseeable point of contention that might stem from this is when youth religious activities turn into proselytizing efforts. Because of a constitutional separation between church and state, schools may not always be able to support these efforts.

Multilevel Model of Citizenship

Utilizing a multilevel model of citizenship provided interesting results which illustrated that certain factors were only influential at particular levels, while others were important at all three. As previously stated, if there is a general concern about the decline of civic and political participation, then those predictors that are significant at the local, national, and global level would be of most importance. Bottery (2003) and Mitchell and Parker’s (2008) views of how citizenship does not fit traditional spatial models and needs to be considered within the context of a “multilayer” approach was indeed validated by this study. The survey results and interviews only confirmed that adolescents typically had different levels of commitments to each level and view them differently.

Utilizing a multilevel model of citizenship also yielded some interesting results relative to the types of factors that were significant. Based on the survey results, what this study found is that only context and process factors were statistically significant across multiple levels, while statistically significant person factors only occurred at one

level. This was another unforeseen outcome in that previous research using large data sets has typically noted that person factors are typically those factors that have larger effect sizes within the various statistical models (Delli Carpini & Ketter, 1996; & Niemi & Junn, 1998; Hart, et al., 2004; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Duke, et al., 2009). The survey itself did not provide any evidence as to why this might be the case, but the interview data does.

In looking at those four factors that were significant at all three levels, the interview data revealed that the reason for their importance was that the four factors in some way helped to establish a connection(s) to a particular or several levels. The discussions with peers and parents/guardians appeared to be important because they allowed adolescents to gain information about these levels. At the same time, parent/guardian involvement and religious youth group involvement provided the means and scaffolding for how to be involved in these levels. In short, what might make these factors important is that they are working to help adolescents establish a connection to these imagined communities that are part of a multilevel model of citizenship. Previous research supports this argument in that the success of items like service-learning projects and discussions about problems is the connection that adolescents make with the community (Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Kahne, Crow & Lee, 2013; Zaff, et al., 2003; Metz & Youniss, 2003; Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014). Based on this, the question then becomes, is a multilevel model of citizenship measuring something completely different than previous studies? The response appears to be, yes, as previous studies have only implied a local or national focus, whereas this study was more set in determining adolescent participation at the various levels. This might explain why context and process factors

were significant across multiple levels when we consider that a multilevel model of citizenship is more directly evaluating how adolescents see themselves connected to various imagined communities.

In many ways, this idea of connections to various imagined communities harkens back to the rationale for global citizenship. Samapatkumar (2007) argues that the importance of global citizenship is that people are in “league with other human beings on the other side of the cultural wall” (p. 74). This study’s use of multilevel citizenship also seems to relate this same idea, but instead of focusing on areas or people that might be on “the other side of the cultural wall,” it is centered on the connection that is made between the individual and the local, national, and global level or some other imagined community. In looking back at those studies that have defined different types of curriculum within K-12 education, all of them denote some aspect of connection back to a community (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). That said, the aspect of getting adolescents to connect with “community(ies)” is already there, it is just that a multilevel of citizenship is more receptive to analyzing what helps adolescents make these connections.

Additionally, interviewees noted that they were involved or interested in being active at one, two, or all three levels. This indicates that there can exist different levels of commitment to a particular level and that individuals may perhaps not be equally dedicated to political and civic participation at all three levels continuously. This is a point of importance in that multilevel citizenship should not mean that individuals are equally committed to each of these levels. Rather, what this suggests is that connections to multiple imagined communities developed at the same time. However, how this

happens is a place where again more research needs to focus; but the fact that this study found factors that were significant at all three levels gives the theoretical foundations of a multilevel citizenship empirical data that suggest that indeed these differences exist and need to be evaluated if there truly is a concern for increasing adolescent willingness to be civically and politically engaged.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Overview

This study has focused on addressing the decline of civic and political participation and what can be done to revitalize and increase adolescent willingness to participate both civically and politically. In order to gain an understanding of how this could be done, a multilevel model of citizenship was adopted. The reason for this is that researchers have called for a “multilayer” approach that signifies how an individual’s willingness to participate can vary between the local, national, and global level (Bottery, 2008; Mitchell & Parker, 2008). However, the research has been theoretical in nature with only a handful of studies utilizing a variation of what could be considered a multilevel model approach towards citizenship has been conducted in countries outside the U.S. (Law & Ng, 2007; Pan, 2011; Lenzi, et. al., 2014). Additionally, rural schools were chosen as the setting for this study because there exists little research on citizenship education within rural areas in comparison to suburban or urban settings. Because of this, research questions focused on determining how adolescents’ willingness to participate at the local, national, and global level might vary, what factors impact an adolescent’s willingness to participate at each level, and what pattern of predictors existed across all three levels. Furthermore, the use of a multilevel model of citizenship meant that though global and national levels fit political and/or physical boundaries, the local level needed to be defined to better understand what is meant by local civic and political participation.

Where do we go from here?

The findings of this study suggest that those factors that were found to be significant at all three levels were items that had not typically been focal points in previous research. This is because previous studies have insinuated a local or national focus where factors that were important at these levels did not necessarily prove to be those that were significant at all three levels. The four factors that focus on getting adolescents to develop a connection to these imagined communities that exist with a multilevel model of citizenship are: having discussions with peers and parents about current events and problems, parental involvement in solving problems, and involvement in a religious youth group that worked to solve problems. By working on forming these connections, adolescents develop pro-social behaviors that lead to the willingness to participate at the various levels.

With this in mind, this study did find one particular item that would be of most interest to educators in promoting civic and political participation – discussions with peers. Considering that all of those interviewed indicated that the discussions they had with their peers stemmed from classroom discussion about current events and problems, educators could easily design activities that get students to talk about current events. At this stage it is difficult to know what type or the frequency of discussion activities that might be most beneficial for adolescent, but establishing a healthy environment that allows students to express their opinions and focusing on interconnectivity or current events and problems is a good start.

Additionally, part of the study focused on determining how adolescents would define the local, national, and global level. The national and global levels were items that interviewees could very easily define within terms of political and geographical

boundaries. However, the definition of the local level was much more personalized in that it represented an imagined community that was constructed without using physical geographic boundaries by considering where adolescents were physically involved in civic, political, and social activities.

Suggestion for Future Research

This study has just begun to scratch the surface regarding the use of a multilevel model citizenship. Because of this there are a variety of suggestions that could be made regarding what future research should entail. In an attempt not to provide an overwhelming list of suggestions, a recommendation of four items that future research should evaluate and use as part of its methods to further understand multilevel model of citizenship in adolescents is given below:

- 1) Researchers can begin to look at evaluating peer discussion within the classroom setting and note what types and the frequency of discussions that might lead to an increase in willingness to participate in political and civic activities at various levels. Additionally, considering the importance of discussion with parents/guardians another focus of future research should consider how discussion with parents and with peers are similar or different in how they help adolescents form connections to various imagined communities. Though discussions were important in both this school and home setting, understanding how they work can provide key details in understanding the nature of forming connections to imagined communities.

2) Because multilevel citizenship denotes a variety of levels that individuals can be committed to, future research should explore using different levels. Though this study utilizes a local, national, and global level, it would be interesting to see how those in future studies might respond to levels that are state- or regionally-based and what kind of factors might impact an adolescent's willingness to be engaged at these levels. Additionally, changing the research setting to one that was urban or suburban might mean that different levels are also needed. During the piloting of the survey and possible interview items for this study, adolescents from more urban areas denoted how their school and city function as two different levels. Though this is anecdotal, it at least suggest of the kind of levels that could be used for future research in urban and suburban areas.

3) Research on adolescents in rural communities has typically found that religious youth groups are the main sources for civic involvement. However, this study found that religious youth groups were only the main source of involvement for those activities aimed at the global level, while extracurricular activities were the main source for those activities at the local level. Future research needs to explore the types of civic engagement activities that religious youth groups, community organizations, and extracurricular activities offer and which level they focus on. Understanding what opportunities that these groups offer and how they relate to a specific level would help stakeholders to better understand how adolescents are being taught to be civically engaged and the types of scaffolding that are in place.

4) Instead of studies that rely heavily upon a quantitative approach, more research needs to focus on a mixed methods where both quantitative and qualitative are used. Though this study relied heavily upon surveying adolescents in twenty high schools, the findings would not be as meaningful without conducting interviews to better understand the survey results. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach that was used in this study might be a recommended approach for future research as well. For example, it gave insight that those interviewed considered their parents' solving local problems an extension of their own involvement, redefining what parental involvement might actually mean.

Can We Redirect Our Course?

While getting ready to cast my vote in the recent state election, where my polling place happens to be a grocery store, I heard a little girl ask her mom what all the people were doing. The mom responded that we were voting. The girl next asked if she was going to vote. The mom quickly rolled her eyes and replied that voting was a waste of time. I have reflected on this series of events repeatedly, wondering how as a teacher working with early adolescents in my 7th grade classroom I can counter those frequently reinforced negative behaviors that might work against civic and political engagement. Realistically, I am not sure I can, because there are so many factors that are, in many instances, beyond the control of my classroom.

That said, this study demonstrated that different types factors are at work providing adolescents with opportunities to observe different behaviors and learn from them. The four factors that were found to be significant at all three levels happen within

school, home, and religious settings that at times overlapped. Alone they may not have much of an impact, but by having educators, parents, religious leaders, and other stakeholders work together, perhaps the decrease in political and civic participation can be redirected. This is no easy challenge, but there is optimism.

My classroom instruction and curriculum has been tremendously impacted by this study. I have integrated discussion of current events and problems as a regular part of my curriculum hoping that it might spark an interest and a connection to one or several levels. Though anecdotal, I have seen many of my students take a strong interest in several of the items we have discussed with many often reporting that they have talked to their parents about what we have done. As an educators and a stakeholder this is my way of making sure the dialogue of democracy stays open.

Appendix I: Survey

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are a series of questions that deal with various types of items that deal with citizenship. There are no right or wrong answers to the survey questions. With this in mind please be honest and give the answer that you think best represents your views by circling the answer or filling in the blank. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you do not have to participate. If there is a question you do not want to answer or if you want to stop taking the survey at anytime then you may do so.

(Please circle or fill in the blank with the appropriate answer)

1) Gender: Male Female

2) Race/Ethnicity:

Hispanic African-American American Indian

Asian White, Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander

Multiracial Other _____

3) Did a parent/guardian attend college? *Yes* *No*

4) Schools provide several resources for students that extend beyond the classroom. One resource is a free lunch or one at a reduced price. Do you currently receive a free or reduced price lunch from the school?

Yes *No*

5) Are you currently taking any Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or other class(es) that gives potential college credit?

Yes No

Please fill in the blank with the number that best represents your thoughts.

6) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I want to know what is going on in my community_____

b) It is my responsibility to learn about problems within the community_____

c) I want to help solve problems in the community_____

d) I believe I can make a difference in the community_____

e) I want to know about local history and culture_____

f) By working with others in the community I can help make things better_____

g) It is my responsibility to learn about local political candidates (example: city council, school board members, and state senators) and the issues they represent_____

h) I need to support local political candidates (examples: city council, school board members, and state senators) that represent my beliefs with how to best deal with problems in the community_____

7) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I want to know what is going on in the U.S. _____

b) It is my responsibility to learn about problems that are happening throughout the U.S.

c) I want to help solve problems that are happening throughout the U.S. _____

d) I believe I can make a difference in the U.S. _____

e) I want to learn about the history and various cultures in the U.S. _____

f) By working with others throughout the U.S. I can help make things better _____

g) It is my responsibility to learn about national political candidates (examples: congressmen, senators, and president) and the issues they represent _____

h) I need to support which national political candidates (example: congressmen, senators, and President) that represent my beliefs with how to best deal with problems in the U.S.

8) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

- a) I want to know what is happening outside the U.S. in other countries _____
- b) It is my responsibility to know about problems that other countries are facing _____
- c) I want to help solve problems that are happening in other countries _____
- d) I believe I can make a difference in countries outside of the U.S. _____
- e) I want to know the history and cultures of other countries _____
- f) By working with those in other countries I can help make things better _____
- g) It is my responsibility to learn about political leaders in other countries and the issues they represent _____
- h) I need to support politicians in other countries that represent my beliefs with how to best deal with international problems _____

9) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

- a) I talk to my parents/guardians about *local* problems and current events _____
- b) I talk to my parents/guardians about *national* problems and current events _____

c) I talk to my parents/guardians about problems and current events in *other countries* _____

10) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) My parents/guardians are involved in helping to solve *local* problems _____

b) My parents/guardians are involved in helping to solve *national* problems _____

c) My parents/guardians are involved in helping to solve problems in *other countries* _____

11) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I talk to my friends about *local* problems and current events _____

b) I talk to my friends about *national* problems and current events _____

c) I talk to my friends about problems and current events in *other countries* _____

12) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

j) My friends are involved in helping to solve *local* problems _____

k) My friends are involved in helping to solve *national* problems _____

l) My friends are involved in helping to solve problems in *other countries* _____

13) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I am involved in a community organization, not related to my school or to a religious organization, which is involved in helping to solve *local* problems _____

b) I am involved in a community organization, not related to my school or to a religious organization, which is involved in helping to solve *national* problems _____

c) I am involved in a community organization, not related to my school or to a religious organization, which is involved in helping to solve problems in *other countries* _____

14) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I am involved in a religious youth group, not related to my school, which is involved in helping to solve *local* problems _____

b) I am involved in a religious youth group, not related to my school, which is involved in helping to solve *national* problems _____

c) I am involved in a religious youth group, not related to my school, which is involved in helping to solve problems in *other countries* _____

15) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) I am actively involved in a club/organization at school that helps those in the *community*_____

b) I am actively involved in a club/organization at school that helps those in the *U.S.*

c) I am actively involved in a club/organization at school that helps those in *other countries*_____

16) Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) My school provides opportunities to help out in the *community*_____

b) My school provides opportunities to help those in other parts of the *U.S.* _____

c) My school provides opportunities to help those in *other countries*_____

17) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement about your SOCIAL STUDIES classes

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3-Neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly Agree

a) My social studies teachers have discussions about problems in the *community*_____

b) My social studies teachers have discussions about problems throughout the *U.S.*

c) My social studies teachers have discussions about problems in *other countries*_____

d) My social studies teachers have discussions about *local* politics_____

e) My social studies teachers have discussions about *U.S.* politics_____

f) My social studies teachers have discussions about politics in *other countries*_____

g) My social studies teachers have taught me about *local* history and culture_____

h) My social studies teachers have taught me about the history and various cultures of the *U.S.* _____

i) My social studies teachers have taught me about the various histories and cultures of *other countries*_____

j) My social studies teachers focus on *local* issues that I am interested in_____

k) My social studies teachers focus on *national* issues that I am interested in_____

l) My social studies teachers focus on issues in *other countries* that I am interested in_____

**Would you be willing to possibly do a follow up interview regarding your answers?
If yes, please list your student ID number on the line below:**

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS
SURVEY!**

Appendix II: Interview Question

Introduction script: Thank you for participating in this interview. A while ago you participated in a survey and these are a series of questions to explore some of those items in more detail. If there is any question you do not feel like answering or if you do not want to continue with the interview at anytime you are free to do so.

1 – How would you define local level?

Follow-up: How would you define the national and global level?

2 – What current events and problems do you discuss with your peers?

Follow-up: Where do these discussions take place?; What kind of topics are discussed?; How have these discussions impact you in wanting to get involved?; How often do these discussion last?

3 – What kind of problems do you try to solve with your youth group?

Follow-up: How often are you involved in these activities?

4 – What kind of problems are your parents/guardians involved in trying to solve?

Follow-up: How often are they involved in these activities? Do you help them or involved with them?

5 – What kind of problems or current events do you discuss with your parents/guardians?

Follow-up: Where do these discussions take place?; What kind of topics are discussed?; How have these discussions impact you in wanting to get involved?; How often do these discussion last?

6 – Why is being involved at the local level important?

7 – Why is being involved at the national level important?

8 – Why is being involved at the global level important?

9 – Which level is the most important to be involved in?

10 – Which level is the least important to be involved in?

Appendix III: Respondents Responses to Survey Items

Discussion with Parents about LOCAL Problems and Current Events

Strongly Disagree	5.8%
Disagree	11.2%
Neutral	27.9%
Agree	38.0%
Strongly Agree	17.1%

Discussion with Parents about NATIONAL Problems and Current Events

Strongly Disagree	5.8%
Disagree	14.8%
Neutral	27.9%
Agree	34.7%
Strongly Agree	16.9%

Discussion with Parents about Problems and Current Events in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	13.8%
Disagree	26.2%
Neutral	30.5%
Agree	18.4%
Strongly Agree	11.0%

Parents/Guardians Involved in Trying to Solve LOCAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	11.9%
Disagree	21.5%
Neutral	34.4%
Agree	24.3%
Strongly Agree	8.0%

Parents/Guardians Involved in Trying to Solve National Problems

Strongly Disagree	21.5%
Disagree	34.7%
Neutral	32.6%
Agree	7.7%
Strongly Agree	3.5%

Parents/Guardians Involved in Trying to Solve Problems in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	34.7%
Disagree	35.8%
Neutral	23.1%
Agree	4.4%
Strongly Agree	2.1%

Discussion with Friends about LOCAL Problems and Current Events

Strongly Disagree	8.1%
Disagree	14.2%
Neutral	28.3%
Agree	37.2%
Strongly Agree	12.2%

Discussion with Friends about NATIONAL Problems and Current Events

Strongly Disagree	9.3%
Disagree	17.5%
Neutral	29.4%
Agree	32.7%
Strongly Agree	11.0%

Discussion with Friends about Problems and Current Events in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	18.5%
Disagree	27.3%
Neutral	27.2%
Agree	19.5%
Strongly Agree	7.5%

Friends Involved in Trying to Solve LOCAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	12.4%
Disagree	26.1%
Neutral	36.6%
Agree	20.9%
Strongly Agree	4.0%

Friends Involved in Trying to Solve NATIONAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	21.8%
Disagree	38.4%
Neutral	32.6%
Agree	5.9%
Strongly Agree	1.2%

Friends Involved in Trying to Solve Problems in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	32.3%
Disagree	37.8%
Neutral	24.2%
Agree	4.6%
Strongly Agree	1.2%

Involved in a Community Organization, Not Related to School or Religious Organization, Which is Involved in Helping to Solved LOCAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	22.1%
Disagree	30.1%
Neutral	23.2%

Agree	14.6%
Strongly Agree	9.9%

Involved in a Community Organization, Not Related to School or Religious Organization, Which is Involved in Helping to Solved LOCAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	29.8%
Disagree	38.3%
Neutral	21.4%
Agree	7.7%
Strongly Agree	2.8%

Involved in a Community Organization, Not Related to School or Religious Organization, Which is Involved in Helping to Solved Problems in Other Countries

Strongly Disagree	35.9%
Disagree	36.7%
Neutral	20.0%
Agree	5.0%
Strongly Agree	2.3%

Involved in a Religious Youth Group, Not Related to School, Which is Involved in Helping to Solve LOCAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	23.8%
Disagree	22.9%
Neutral	20.6%
Agree	17.3%
Strongly Agree	15.5%

Involved in a Religious Youth Group, Not Related to School, Which is Involved in Helping to Solve NATIONAL Problems

Strongly Disagree	29.6%
Disagree	31.2%
Neutral	21.7%
Agree	10.8%
Strongly Agree	6.8%

Involved in a Religious Youth Group, Not Related to School, Which is Involved in Helping to Solve Problems in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	34.4%
Disagree	31.4%
Neutral	18.1%
Agree	8.6%
Strongly Agree	7.6%

Actively Involved in a Club/Organization at School that Helps Those in the COMMUNITY

Strongly Disagree	13.1%
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Disagree	13.8%
Neutral	16.7%
Agree	27.5%
Strongly Agree	28.9%

Actively Involved in a Club/Organization at School that Helps Those in the U.S.

Strongly Disagree	19.3%
Disagree	27.6%
Neutral	27.2%
Agree	15.9%
Strongly Agree	9.9%

Actively Involved in a Club/Organization at School that Helps Those in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	31.8%
Disagree	33.7%
Neutral	22.8%
Agree	6.9%
Strongly Agree	4.8%

School Provides Opportunities to Help Out in the COMMUNITY

Strongly Disagree	3.3%
Disagree	5.7%
Neutral	19.6%
Agree	37.3%
Strongly Agree	34.1%

School Provides Opportunities to Help Out in Other Parts of the U.S.

Strongly Disagree	11.5%
Disagree	20.7%
Neutral	34.7%
Agree	23.9%
Strongly Agree	9.3%

School Provides Opportunities to Help Out Those in OTHER COUNTRIES

Strongly Disagree	26.0%
Disagree	29.0%
Neutral	28.9%
Agree	10.5%
Strongly Agree	5.7%

Social Studies Curriculum Emphasis (Scale of 4 – 20)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Local	14.5	3.6
National	16.4	2.9
Global	15.5	3.2

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